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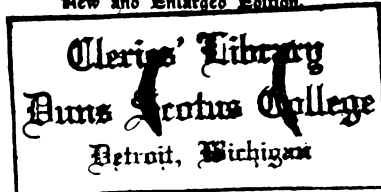


THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

BY

FATHER CLARE, S.J.

New and Enlarged Edition.



LONDON AND LEAMINGTON:

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PREFACE.

THE Book of the **Spiritual Exercises** contains the principles on which St. Ignatius, under God, formed his Society, and embodies its very essence and spirit. It is for this reason that all who are called by God to become members of that Society, and who wish to correspond to their high vocation, must always regard it as a sacred duty to apply themselves seriously to a study of the meaning and bearing of each word of a work which in such a short and concise form comprises the whole spirit of the Institute of the Society of Jesus, and to form themselves both interiorly and exteriorly in accordance with its teaching.

To enable them to do this as effectually as by God's grace is possible, every member of the Society on his entrance has to spend one month in performing the Exercises, and during the two years of retirement in the Novitiate has to make them the constant subject of his study. In addition to this, there is a third year of probation devoted to the same holy occupation, and to a repetition of the month's retreat after each one has completed his full course of studies. Moreover, for the better

understanding of the Exercises, and to prevent as far as possible all erroneous application and interpretation of them, it is deemed necessary that during these three years all should be under the guidance of an experienced director or instructor, whose duty it is to explain and develop those truths and their practical conclusions which are so briefly and concisely set down by St. Ignatius.

Just as the Sacred Scriptures, if they are to be of practical utility, and are to exercise an influence on our minds and hearts, require that their meaning be explained to us by legitimate and God-guided interpreters, so too must this work of our holy Founder, which with some reason is said to have been dictated in its essential parts by the Mother of our Lord, be interpreted by competent authority, if it is not simply to be *read*, but to be applied to our daily life, and to mould and regulate our whole interior and exterior views and conduct. It is for this reason, and to supply as far as possible for the absence and want of such a director and instructor, that I publish the following pages, which are meant principally, though not exclusively, for those persons who, whether in the world, or in the ecclesiastical state, or consecrated to God in Religion, are accustomed to make an annual retreat, and are aiming at the perfection of their state of life.

I do it also the more readily, as we frequently

hear great regret expressed that the Exercises are published in a language which is not understood by many, and also that they are compressed into such a small space that they are a sealed book except to those who are initiated.

Emboldened, then, by the example of the Very Reverend Father Roothaan of holy memory, of Father Ciccolini in Rome, Fathers Neumayr and Meschler in Germany, of Father Figuera in Spain, &c., I have humbly tried to follow in their footsteps, hoping that it may be for the greater glory of God and for the salvation and perfection of souls.

I have also added three Appendixes, which contain subjects for election or for reformation of life, the consideration of which may be of great practical benefit for persons living in the world, for priests, and for Religious.

If there be anything in these pages which is in any way at variance with the letter or spirit of the Spiritual Exercises, or which is not in full accord with the teachings of Holy Church, I hereby express regret and cordially reject it.

J. C.

*St. Beuno's College,
Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1896.*

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN issuing a second edition of THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE, the author has availed himself of the kind suggestions which have reached him from various sources, and which have been made by persons whose judgment merits all respect. Therefore, where important instructions have been expressed with too great conciseness and brevity, and were thereby open to misapprehension, they have been more fully explained; the contemplations on the life of our Blessed Lord, the points only of which have been laid down by our holy Father in his Book of the Spiritual Exercises, have been developed for the benefit of those who are less advanced in the contemplative method of prayer; several contemplations on the Sacred Passion have been added for the convenience of such as may have the inclination and opportunity to devote themselves to study more deeply in the record of the sufferings and death of Jesus, what was the excess of His love for each of us, what was the price that He paid for our redemption, what is the fearful malice of sin which demanded such an awful atonement, and what

is the value of an immortal soul ; they will also be profitable by impressing upon us the great lesson of the necessity of self-sacrifice, if we mean to be true followers of Christ. Moreover, some new Meditations and Considerations on subjects of practical importance bearing on our daily life have also been introduced.

Lastly, there is also added a fourth Appendix, for the benefit of such as desire to make a retreat of eight or four days, and who cannot avail themselves of the wise counsels of an experienced director. For the convenience of such persons, several Orders of the Exercises are drawn up, from which they can select the one which they may deem best adapted to their state, circumstances, and requirements.

In conclusion, the author would humbly beg of those who may derive from the study of these pages some increase in their knowledge and love of our Blessed Lord, that they would say a prayer for him, that "whilst preaching to others, he himself may not become a castaway."¹

J. C.

*St. Beuno's College,
Feast of St. Ignatius, 1898.*

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

THE PRAYERS OF ST. IGNATIUS.

ANIMA CHRISTI.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, be my salvation.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, cleanse me.
Passion of Christ, be my strength.
O good Jesus; graciously hear me.
In Thy sacred Wounds hide me,
Nor let me be ever separated from Thee.
From the wicked enemy defend me.
In my dying hour do Thou call me,
And bid me come to Thee,
That together with Thy Saints I may praise Thee,
For ever and ever. Amen.

SUME ET SUSCIPE.

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty; accept my memory, my understanding, and all my will, whatever I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me; to Thee, O Lord, I give it back again. All is Thine; dispose of it according to all Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, and this is enough for me. Amen.



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The Science of Spiritual Life.

ABRIDGMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

1. THE Book of the Exercises may fitly be described as a practical course of the whole spiritual life. It lays down its END, and prescribes the MEANS by which that end is to be attained.

2. As regards the *end* of spiritual life, it is declared in the first of the twenty Annotations which are placed at the very beginning of the Book of Spiritual Exercises. This is to root out all inordinate affections, such as are not in perfect accordance with the principles of faith and the dictates of right reason; and when these have been eradicated, to seek and discover the Divine will for the ordering and regulating of life.

It is this end which we are ever to keep before our eyes.

3. With regard to the *means* by the employment of which we may safely trust to secure the end, they are either general or special.

4. The *general* means are prayer and self-conquest. The *special* means are found in the method and rules of election and of reformation of life; in the rules for the discernment of spirits for the use of those who are more advanced; in the rules on scruples; and lastly, in the rules for regulating ourselves and our

judgments according to the teaching and spirit of the Holy Catholic Church.

5. The first of the general means, as we have said, is Prayer. The end of prayer, as it is explained in the first Annotation and in the very title of the Exercises, is to arouse devotion and piety, by which a man will overcome himself, and set his life in order.

6. This prayer is divided into *vocal* prayer, of which the *method* is given to us in the third of the "three methods of prayer;" and *mental* prayer, such as meditation, contemplation, and the first and second of the "three methods of prayer," which are placed at the end of the Book of Spiritual Exercises.

7. The means which are to be employed, and the price as it were which we have to pay, if we would succeed in prayer, are contained in the "ten Additions" and in the twelfth and thirteenth Annotations.

8. The next general means for the attainment of spiritual life is, as we noted above, *victory* over self, which we may call the *proximate* end of spiritual life.

It is this self-conquest which enables us to regulate and rightly dispose our lives, not by destroying or changing our nature, but by purifying, strengthening, and perfecting it, not by extirpating the passions of the human soul, but by directing and elevating them.

The different methods to be employed in the practice of this self-conquest are given to us briefly but admirably in the tenth of the Additions, where we find the distinction between internal and external penance is laid down, together with the different ways in which external penance may be practised. The various motives also are proposed for the exercise of self-conquest. Further motives are also put before us in the meditations during the course of the Exercises; such, for example, as the imitation of our Lord in His private and Public Life, as we contemplate it during the second

part of the retreat ; or, in the Third Week, the motive of sympathy with, and gratitude for all which He endured during the three days in which He suffered and died for our redemption.

The *principle* which is to guide us in our practices of self-conquest is denoted to us mainly in the contemplation of the " Kingdom of Christ," and in the thirteenth Annotation, and also in the rules regarding temperance in our meals.

St. Francis Xavier came forth from the Spiritual Exercises so deeply impressed with the conviction of the necessity of this self-conquest, that during the whole of his after-life he was constantly repeating this motto to himself, *Vince teipsum* ; and when asked wherefore he did so, his answer was, " I have not learnt any other lesson from our holy Father Ignatius."

Such in brief are the Exercises. In them we have the spirit and end of the Society founded by St. Ignatius, together with all the means by which this spirit is to be maintained, and the end of its institutions is to be secured. It is according to this little book that every Jesuit is to be moulded ; and by this, before the Constitutions of the Society were drawn up, were all its members formed. It contains the very bones and marrow of the Institute, and may be styled with truth the war-book of every true Jesuit. Consequently, whoever means to respond to his vocation, must make it his duty, and must consider it his conscientious obligation to study it and to learn it thoroughly. For this purpose he cannot do better than familiarize himself with the commentaries upon it of Father Roothaan, to whom the Society owes an eternal debt of gratitude for the admirable light which he has thrown upon the whole book in his notes and comments on every page.¹

¹ Meschler on the Exercises.

By way of summarizing the Exercises, and showing briefly the relation between the different parts, we may observe :

First, that they are divided into four parts, or, as they are called, weeks.

In the First Week we learn to serve God, and earnestly to desire to reform and regulate our lives. To this we are led by the meditation on the End of Man. By meditations on Sin we are excited to shame, confusion, sorrow, and fear for our past sins, and to repentance for them; and by the considerations on Death, Judgment, and Hell, we are induced to greater care to avoid them for the future.

From which the result is that we see that the only true happiness of man is to be found in the service of God in this life, by which we shall secure also eternal possession of Him hereafter.

In the Second Week we learn that this service of God our Lord consists in the imitation of Christ, who assumed our nature, in order to re-establish His Father's Kingdom. We are induced to follow Him in the "Kingdom of Christ," and to aspire to sanctity by the imitation of His solid virtues as presented in the Incarnation, Nativity, Flight into Egypt, Life at Nazareth, &c. By these contemplations we are led to a generous resolve to despise all those things which tend to withdraw us from our last end, and to an heroic determination to embrace not what is gratifying to the natural man, but what is more in conformity with the doctrine and example of our Lord, and to choose hardships and injuries rather than pleasure and honour,¹ and that without any reserve.²

In the Third Week, after making our election, we confirm ourselves in it, and in a resolution to imitate

¹ Two Standards.

² Three Classes, and Three Degrees of Humility.

more perfectly Christ our Lord in the practice of heroic virtue as manifested in the several mysteries of His Sacred Passion and Death, compassionating and sympathizing with Him in His feelings, affections, and generous dispositions.

In the Fourth Week we learn to serve God in a spirit of love and gladness, according to that of St. Paul: ¹ "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." The conclusion will be that the only happiness of man is to imitate Christ here, in the sweet hope of rising with Him later, and of possessing Him eternally hereafter, and of enjoying the happiness of loving our God, infinitely good in Himself, and infinitely good to us.

It is thus that we are stimulated to carry out our holy resolutions, and to persevere in them till death.

ON THE METHOD OF MEDITATION.

One of the chief advantages which is reaped from making the Spiritual Exercises is that we learn thereby the method of mental prayer, and how to make it. It is true that St. Ignatius nowhere gives a formal instruction on the subject, but in the Annotations at the beginning of the Book of Spiritual Exercises, and in the Additions at the end of the meditations for the First Week, which are supposed to be explained and supplemented by the person who gives the Exercises, and is called the director, the Saint provides ample instruction to enable the exercitant to make meditation; supposing always that he is in earnest and in the good dispositions to correspond with the grace of God, and with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, which will not be wanting to him.²

¹ Coloss. iii. 1.

² Suarez, *De Rel.* l. ix. c. 6.

It was by a most singular providence of God that St. Ignatius was chosen to furnish us with a method of prayer so practical and safe, and so consonant with our nature; which is free from the danger of illusions, and which has been sanctioned by the approval of the Church and her Pontiffs, and adopted by so many of her Saints;¹ and of which Suarez² writes: "Hanc methodum et modum orandi tanquam præclarum donum a Deo datum et medium efficacissimum ad finem suum consequendum æstimare debet Societas." And again:³ "In quo nihil deest quod desiderari possit." It was by these means that St. Philip Neri acquired his spirit of contemplation, and by the same method,⁴ under the guidance of St. Francis Borgia, that St. Theresa acquired her extraordinary gift of mental prayer.

With regard then to the practice of mental prayer, or meditation properly so called, we may divide the subject under four headings: first, we have the preparation; secondly, the preludes; thirdly, the exercise of the three powers or faculties of the soul; and fourthly, the reflection.

1. The *preparation* for meditation is either remote or immediate. The former is pointed out to us in the first and second Additions. In the evening we must review well and prepare the points of the subject-matter on which we propose to meditate on the following morning, and determine the special fruit which we desire to draw from it. On retiring to rest we must briefly recall it to mind, and after making some short prayer suitable to it, we must endeavour to fall asleep. How available and profitable this practice is to give us a clear idea of what we are going to medi-

¹ *Direct. Præm.* § 3.

² *De Rel.* l. ix. c. 6, § 3.

³ *Ibid.* § 7.

⁴ Nolasco, c. 34.

tate upon is inconceivable, and also how much it is calculated to enhance the importance of this the first duty of the day.

On awaking, and whilst washing and dressing, we must revert to the same subject, and occupy our minds with the thoughts of it, or in prayers in harmony with it.

If, for example, we are engaged in meditations of the First Week, or in the Purgative Way, we may picture ourselves as rebel soldiers covered with shame and confusion, about to be brought into the presence of our King, or as criminals laden with chains and about to stand before our Judge, or as lepers eaten up with loathsome ulcers; any of which may conduce to excite and promote affections conformable to the subject of our meditation. Or again, we might employ the time in reciting the *Miserere*, or some other of the Penitential Psalms.

Similarly, if we are employed in contemplations which concern the mysteries of our Lord's Life, and are proper to the Illuminative Way, we should picture to ourselves the circumstances and place of the special mystery, or the persons engaged in it, with their thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and the rest, or may employ ourselves in suitable vocal prayers, or in reciting some Psalm. By this means the mind is kept recollected and occasions of distractions are prevented, and the soul is well disposed for prayer.

With regard to the proximate or immediate preparation, we should during the space of a few minutes make a firm resolution to devote ourselves earnestly to our duty, and to give no room to any other thought, solicitude, or affection. This is most important; for if we go to prayer with a firm resolution and a determined will to apply ourselves seriously, we shall generally find that it will succeed happily. We must also humble

ourselves in the presence of God, protesting our vileness and unworthiness to enter into converse with His tremendous Majesty.

But care must be taken that this humility does not in any way diminish our filial confidence in Him who is our loving and Heavenly Father, who is always more willing to converse with us than we are to entertain ourselves with Him, and whose "delight is to be with the children of men."

We may briefly reflect also on the lights and graces we may derive from this meditation if it be well performed; for it has not unfrequently happened that one meditation faithfully and carefully made has been the beginning of eternal salvation and of perfection, as was the meditation on death in the case of St. Francis Borgia, and on the value of the soul in that of St. Francis Xavier.

Lastly, we must unite our prayer with that of Jesus Christ, entreating Him through His infinite merits to grant that all our faculties, thoughts, and affections may tend only to the glory and honour of our God.

2. We then in a spirit of faith in God's presence kneel down, and in humble adoration make our preparatory prayer that all our intentions, actions, and endeavours may be devoted purely to the greater glory of God and to our soul's salvation, and say the prayer, "Prevent, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our actions," &c., and according to our devotion, the "Hail Mary" and a prayer to St. Joseph, to beg their assistance.

After this commencement and preparatory prayer comes the first prelude, or composition of place, as is clearly set down in the first exercise and in the *Directorium*, chap. xiv. This consists in forming some material image or similitude by means of our imagination, when the subject of meditation is immaterial and incorporeal. In doing this care must be taken to avoid

too great an effort or overstraining of the brain; nor should too much time be spent on it, or on any minute detail or realism; but only so much as will be sufficient to fix and quiet the mind and help to recall it to the subject or mystery on which we are about to meditate. St. Ignatius gives us an example of this in the first Exercise on "Three Sins."

In the second prelude, which must never be omitted, we must beg of God the grace which we desire, and really wish to obtain, as St. Ignatius so often repeats,¹ *petere id quod volo*—namely, the proper and special fruit to be obtained from the meditation, thus: "My dear Lord, without you I can do nothing. Vouchsafe, then, to help me to bring home to myself this truth or this mystery which I am going to meditate, and to draw from it the proper fruit for the sanctification and salvation of my soul."

Having spent some five or six minutes in the preludes, we begin the meditation properly so called, namely, the exercise of the three powers of the soul, the memory, understanding, and will. We first employ the memory by calling to mind the subject of meditation. The intellect is next exercised in calmly discussing and reasoning upon it, in penetrating into its meaning, considering its reasonableness, weighing its importance, and deducing practical consequences. After thus clearly and distinctly weighing the matter, and its application to ourselves, and rejecting all pretext or excuses which self-love might suggest for evading the conclusions for the correction of our conduct thence arising, we next proceed to the exercise of the will, the third faculty. With regard to the employment of the understanding,

¹ What we should desire, and consequently should always earnestly ask for, is that God would grant us light to see His holy truth, and strength of will to embrace it and its practical consequences; for of what avail would be the illustration of the understanding, if the will were not moved by the grace of God to correspond?

two things must be observed: first, care must be taken not to tire or weary the head by too intense application, but to proceed with calmness and quiet, otherwise it could not continue to function, and thus meditation would be prevented and consequently would fail to produce fruit. Secondly, although we are to use our intellect seriously, and thereby acquire clear and deep convictions, yet we must rather employ the *will* in devout affections and in forming suitable practical resolutions; and consequently we should devote more time to exercising it than to making use of the understanding, in subtle or bright thoughts and ideas.

Finally, the will is to be employed in eliciting acts of love of what is good and of aversion to what is evil and less good, as it is presented to it by the understanding; or of hope or fear, of desire or confusion and shame, and finally in forming resolutions to change or regulate more perfectly one's life. These resolutions should be made from the heart and often insisted upon.

And with respect to these acts of the will, they are not to be enforced by violence, but by a sincere and calm movement of the affections of the soul, which depend specially upon God and are a gift of His grace, although requiring our co-operation. Wherefore the soul must by humility and purity of heart dispose itself to receive this grace rather than rely on its own efforts and industry.

Again, we must remember that in the exercise of our will the soul is treating more directly and immediately with God, than in the employment of the understanding, and therefore there is need of greater reverence, which should also manifest itself externally by our assuming a humble and more reverential and devout position. Lastly, our resolutions must above all things be practical; and let us not be tired of frequently repeating them, as in so doing they become

more deeply impressed on the mind and add to the firmness of our purpose.

With regard to this the essential part of meditation, St. Ignatius gives us certain documents, or cautions, in the course of the Exercises. Thus in the second Annotation, he tells us that we must avoid too much speculation, and subtle and studied discussions of the intellect, which do not tend to inflame the will with love and desires of what we propose to acquire in our prayer; otherwise our application would degenerate into a study instead of being a prayer.

For this same reason he warns us in the fourth Addition, not to be anxious to run hastily over all the points which we have prepared for consideration, but rather to dwell on any particular point as long as we find in it spiritual comfort, or devotion, or thoughts that are profitable for our advancement in virtue and for the conquest of self, even though the whole hour of meditation be spent therein.

With respect to the colloquy, St. Ignatius, at the end of the first meditation, says that "it should be addressed as by a friend to a friend, or by a servant to his master, or by a criminal to his judge; now humbly requesting some favour, now acknowledging our faults; at one time begging counsel or returning thanks, at another asking for some special virtue which we desire; or expressing our feelings with regard to the subject-matter of the meditation and the rest."

The Saint always prescribes these colloquies at the end of our Exercises;¹ but it is highly advantageous to make them during the course of the meditation whenever we feel so inclined. There are various reasons why we should always finish with one or more colloquies. Thus, after communing in God's presence

¹ *Direct.* xv. § 5.

for so long, it is fitting that we should not leave Him abruptly, but with all reverence and respect; moreover, at the close of our meditation, the soul is more inflamed and penetrated by grace, and consequently better disposed to ask for what she wants and to make her acts with greater fervour and devotion.

Further, it is well also to remark again that there is more need of reverence in making the colloquies, as is observed in the third Annotation, than in discoursing with the intellect; for though when we speak about a king, all respect is to be observed, nevertheless in discoursing with him personally, this is much more to be manifested.¹ Another caution of great importance is that we observe great exactness in giving to prayer the full time prescribed; and this more particularly when it proves irksome, dry, and void of all spiritual consolation. It is at such times that the devil never fails to urge us by countless pretexts to shorten and curtail it; and therefore St. Ignatius, in the twelfth and thirteenth Annotations, counsels us on the contrary rather to prolong our prayer on such occasions, thereby not only to resist, but also to conquer the enemy of our human nature. This fidelity and constancy in defiance of aridity and heaviness and desolation of spirit, is one of the principal means to become real men of prayer.

Finally, the time of prayer being finished, St. Ignatius counsels us to spend a quarter of an hour in reflecting upon and making a diligent and accurate examination of the meditation. This may be done either sitting or standing or walking about; and it is to be made in order to see if it has been performed well or ill. If ill, we must investigate the reasons, and make an act of sorrow and of purpose of amendment for the future; if well, then we must return thanks to God and resolve to continue in the same course.

¹ *Direct.* xv. §§ 6 and 7; and Suarez, ix. v. § 5.

Such is the manner which the Saint prescribes for meditation.

ON THE METHOD OF CONTEMPLATION.

In the succeeding parts of the Exercises, after the First Week we find that the form of meditation is changed, and is more aptly styled contemplation; inasmuch as we place ourselves in spirit in the presence of the mystery which is to occupy us, and consider the persons therein concerned, and try to realize their words and actions, their desires and views, together with all the attendant circumstances, drawing from each the lessons which they are calculated to teach, and which the Holy Ghost may be pleased to inspire.

With regard to the remote preparation, it consists in determining the several points of the mystery which we propose to contemplate, and in each point the persons and their thoughts, and words or actions, if any; on retiring to rest, in recalling briefly to mind the same, and the fruit which we wish to draw from it; and on awaking and rising, in quietly occupying our mind on some general thoughts concerning it.

The immediate preparation differs in nothing from that of meditation, consisting in short acts of faith in the presence of God, of profound humility, of gratitude for being allowed the favour of communing with His Divine Majesty, &c. Then, after an act of adoration and preparatory prayer, St. Ignatius prescribes as a first prelude a cursory view of the whole mystery which we are to contemplate, without entering especially upon any particular point.¹ Just as when a fine landscape is presented to our view, we see it all confusedly with one glance, whereas afterwards we carefully study it part by part, and thus come to fully appreciate all its

¹ *Direct.* xix. § 4.

beauties and excellencies. In the second prelude we are to picture in our imagination the place, the persons, and circumstances of the mystery, without however entering into too minute details, which might occupy time, and would be unprofitable to our soul's progress. In the third prelude we are to beg that we may have a clearer knowledge of our Blessed Lord as He displays Himself and His perfections in the mystery, that so we may come to love Him more ardently and tenderly, and may imitate Him the more closely in the exercise of the virtues He therein displays.

In the contemplation¹ we consider the outward bearing, the inward disposition, the thoughts and views of our Lord or our Lady, or of any others who figure in the scene; also their actions and the intention and manner in which they perform them. From each of which we draw fruit; either *comparing* our ways, views, dispositions, and intentions with those before us, or *resolving* to conform ourselves more perfectly with our great original, or *determining* the occasions on which we will reduce the resolutions to practice. In all this we must act as really present and taking our part in the mystery, and allowing our hearts to communicate freely with the persons whose example we are studying. Naturally our colloquies will be much more frequent in this method of prayer than in meditation proper, as it is hard to be in the presence of others as silent observers and without speaking.

¹ In considering the *persons*, we picture to ourselves their exterior comportment, their interior virtues theological and moral in the just, and the opposite vices in the wicked; the situation and circumstances in which they are placed, &c. As to the *words*, we consider the time and manner in which they are uttered, the matter of them, &c., and also the internal feelings and affections which prompted them. As regards the *actions*, we may observe their causes, whether final or proximate, partial or total. Also the intention, manner, time, place, &c., of them.

It may be useful for those who are as yet unused to meditation, to have the adjoined method of meditation before them whilst performing that exercise.

METHOD OF MEDITATION.

REMOTE PREPARATION.—Banish pride, sensuality, dissipation, and exercise the contrary virtues, humility, mortification, and recollection.

IMMEDIATE PREPARATION.—Read over the meditation the day before. Upon first awaking think of the meditation to be made. Excite appropriate sentiments. Enter upon it with a tranquil mind.

Commencement.

Standing, reflect that God is present.

Kneeling, adore. Preparatory prayer.

PRELUDES—

Brief review of the subject.

Construction of place.

Petition for special grace to understand and resolve.

The Meditation.

THE MEMORY—

Recall to mind the matter of the meditation.

THE UNDERSTANDING—

1. What is to be considered ?
2. What practical conclusion to be drawn ?
3. What are the motives ? Is it becoming, useful, agreeable, easy, necessary ?
4. How has this been observed hitherto ?
5. What is to be done in future ?
6. What obstacle is to be removed ?
7. What means to be taken ?

THE WILL—

1. Excite affections throughout the meditation more with the heart than the lips.

2. At the end of each practical consideration form resolutions: — Practical — Particular — Suited to present circumstances. Based upon solid motives—Humble—With fervent supplication for assistance.

Conclusion.

RECAPITULATION,

In which the resolutions made are confirmed.

EJACULATION,

Taken from the Holy Scriptures or the Fathers, recalling to mind the matter of the meditation, and the resolutions formed.

COLLOQUY,

Addressed to Jesus Christ, B.V.M., or to any Saint.

Reflection.

EXAMEN,

Of the manner in which the meditation has been made.

RECAPITULATION,

Of the whole meditation.

Of the practical conclusions—motives—affections—resolutions—particular inspirations.

ON THE NATURE AND DIVISION OF
THE EXERCISES.

1. The Spiritual Exercises are not merely a collection of meditations in which a man reflects upon himself and upon his duties, and devoutly converses with God. Many masters of spirit had already compiled such books, as St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, and St. Laurence Justinian; nor are they only a guide for the time of retreat, but they are also a complete, concise, and practical course of spiritual life, whereby every one may securely attain his ultimate end. They lead man by a right use of creatures, and by the imitation of Jesus Christ, to a perfect union with God, and to a holy conformity with His Divine will. For us of the Society they are a book of doctrine, and a directory of the asceticism of the Society.¹ It is also aptly called by a holy man of the Bernardine Order, "libellum toti generi humano institutum."² And Paul III., in a Brief dated 1548, declares "dicta exercitia pietate ac sanctitate plena et ad spiritualem profectum fidelium valde utilia et salubria esse," and moreover he exhorts all the faithful to make use of them.

2. They are divided into three parts. The first of which contains the Annotations, the second the meditations, and the third comprises the precepts, rules, and industries of spiritual life.

3. The first process in the spiritual life is to reclaim the sinner from his evil life by inspiring him with a spirit of penance, with real sorrow for his sins, and by rooting out of his soul every inordinate affection and every attachment which is not in accordance with the

¹ Suarez, *De Religione*, bk. ix. cc. v. vi.

² *Hist. Soc.* xvi. § 127.

teaching of faith and the dictates of right reason, and this is called the *Purgative* process.

The next is to put the exercitant in the right way, which is Christ our Lord, by presenting Him as the model which every man is bound to study and to know,¹ and to copy in himself,² in his mind and heart and conduct; whether it be in the ordinary course of life, or amidst extraordinary difficulties and trials, such as our Lord underwent during His Sacred Passion and in His Death. This is the *Illuminative* process.

Lastly, when the soul has succeeded in this, it is led to a close union with our Lord in mind, and heart, and will, and thus attains perfection here, and is prepared for an everlasting union with Him in Heaven, which was the desire of His Sacred Heart.³ This is the *Unitive* process.

It is needless to add that of the precepts, rules, and industries of spiritual life, not all are adapted to each process, but some are applicable to one and some to another.

4. First among the industries laid down by St. Ignatius, and which he places in the beginning of his Book of the Spiritual Exercises, are what he calls "Annotations." These are certain memoranda or directions, twenty in number, which conduce much to the understanding of the Exercises, and to the performing of them with advantage and great spiritual profit; and next to these the Additions.

¹ "Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." (St. John xvii. 3.)

² "For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son." (Romans viii. 29.)

³ "That they may be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." (St. John xvii. 21.)

THE ANNOTATIONS.

St. Ignatius states the object of these Annotations to be, to give us some understanding of the Exercises, and to serve as a help both to the director and to the exercitant who makes the Exercises.

1. In the first we have set down the *nature* and the end of the Exercises. Just as natural life has its own special acts, as walking and running, and other bodily exercises, as well as reading, study, and other mental exercises, so has the soul her various acts, in order to acquire the knowledge and love of God and the imitation of Jesus Christ, such as the examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, vocal, and other mental prayer, and all those means of preparing and disposing the soul to divest itself of every inordinate affection; and when this has been done, of seeking and finding out the Divine will regarding the regulating of life in order to secure eternal salvation.

Here, then, we see the three-fold end we must have in view:

(α) To repress inordinate affections, namely, such as do not lead us to our end, or which expose us to the danger of losing it, or which neither faith nor right reason approve.

(β) To learn God's will, that we may regulate our lives in accordance with it, and become what God wants as regards His commandments, the duties of our state of life, &c. This is at once solid, practical, easy, and sure, and is not liable to delusion.

That the Exercises enable us to do this is proved by universal experience, by the very nature of the Exercises which prepare and dispose both the mind and heart, and lastly, by the extraordinary graces which are given

to those who rightly perform them. From this then we see that the Spiritual Exercises are to be practical, not speculative, that we are not to seek for bright thoughts, and brilliant illustrations, and sublime ideas. No! our object must be to penetrate deeply into our interior that we may know ourselves thoroughly, see our evil inclinations, and make up our minds to subdue them. It is thus, and not by brilliant thoughts and ideas that we shall attain the end proposed. Without this, no matter what lights or sensible devotion and consolation we may have, all would be labour in vain.

2. In the second Annotation the director is instructed to give the points of the meditations or contemplations *briefly*, and to avoid any personal ideas or exaggerations, and rather to fix the nail and let the exercitant drive it home; for by so doing he will be more interested, and will make the subject more practical and more personal, and at the same time will be more impressed; nor must the exercitant go in search of many thoughts or fine and original ideas, but rather insist on few and good.

3. In the third Annotation St. Ignatius repeats in what the labour of meditation consists; namely, in the earnest application of the intellect, thereby to get a clear apprehension of the subject, and in the exercise of the will desirous to draw from it all the practical good we can. When we directly address ourselves to God or His saints in the course of our meditation, it must be done always with greater reverence than whilst we are communing with ourselves.¹

4. The fourth regards the length of time to be devoted to each of the four divisions of the Exercises. This must be determined by the character, dispositions,

¹ "Non negatur semper in oratione reverentiam esse adhibendam esto ejus cura non sit tam necessaria sicut quando in colloquiis et affectibus versamar." (Suarez, *De Religione*, t. xv. l. ix. c. v. § 7.)

and circumstances of the exercitant, and on the greater or lesser fruit which he derives from them.

In the following sixteen Annotations, St. Ignatius details the helps and the obstacles to success, and the dispositions in which we are to begin and continue the Exercises.

5. Thus in the fifth we are to have a courageous and generous heart towards God,¹ throwing ourselves absolutely into His arms; determined to do without any reserve, whatever He may desire; leaving Him to lead us whithersoever He pleases, no matter how repugnant it may be to our corrupt nature, and to mould us as He shall think fit.² It would be a great mistake to commence the retreat as a duty to be got through; or to lay down certain limits to which we will go but no further in following the call of God. Moreover, we should determine what is the sacrifice which God requires from us, and resolve at all cost to make it. Observe how strongly St. Ignatius urges upon us this necessary disposition.³

6. When in the course of the Exercises we experience no emotion either good or bad, it is sometimes a sign that we are not making any real effort or are not in earnest; though this calm may at times arise from physical causes over which we have no control. In such cases it is well to examine if the Exercises are made at the proper times, if they are performed

¹ This disposition is absolutely necessary; for a retreat, if it is made properly, is a time of conflict between the powers of good and evil; and to gain the victory we must cast aside all niggardliness and selfish wavering or fear.

² "Sicut lutum in manu figuli sic ego in manu Domini." (Ecclus. xxxiii.)

³ "It is of great consequence that he who enters on the Exercises should do so with a great soul, and with a generous spirit towards his Creator and Lord, offering up to Him his will and liberty, so that His Divine Majesty may dispose of him and of all he has, according to His most holy will." (Spiritual Exercises.)

seriously and earnestly, and if the various Additions are punctually observed.

In the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth Annotations is pointed out the duty of the director according to the various states in which the exercitant may find himself. But from them we gather that in those who make the Spiritual Exercises a stout heart is required to fight against weariness, heaviness, and disquiet of spirit, and the temptations of the devil; in resisting which the director is instructed how to assist the exercitant. It may be that solitude and retirement produce irksomeness, or that dryness and desolation makes him regard prayer as loss of time, or that the devil perplexes the conscience. To overcome these it is necessary to strengthen our confidence in God, and to guide ourselves by the rules for the Discernment of Spirits.

With regard to the tenth Annotation,¹ *vide* Suarez, *De Exerc.* bk. ix. v. 8, 9.

11. In the eleventh Annotation St. Ignatius tells us that we are to fix our minds on the mysteries proper for that part of the Exercises on which we are engaged and on the fruit peculiar to it, and not to pass to any other. This is also prescribed in the sixth of the ten Additions. In the same manner we must not amuse or distract ourselves by reading or writing things foreign to the subject in hand.²

¹ St. Ignatius observes that the enemy of human nature is wont to attack those who are engaged in the second process of the Spiritual Exercises or the Illuminative Way, rather than those in the Purgative Way. And this, if we take in the mind of the Saint, is true: for he adds, *Sub specie boni*. The temptations of beginners are more palpable and undisguised, and thus are less dangerous. (Conf. Augustine, on Psalm 29.)

And again, Almighty God in His love and providence helps the beginner with special graces, with spiritual consolations, with facility in the performance of the Exercises, &c., whereas in regard of those who are more advanced He allows the enemy wider scope for the greater and more solid perfection of those who are tempted. (Conf. Gregory, *Moral*, xxiv. c. 7.)

² *Direct.* iii. §§ 2—5:

12 and 13. We must firmly adhere to the full time allotted for meditation; notwithstanding our repugnance, or any feeling of desolation; or if we make any change it should be rather to prolong¹ it by a few minutes, thereby to gain a complete victory over the devil.

14. In the fourteenth Annotation we are cautioned against being carried away in time of consolation and making any vow or binding promise; and it is the duty of the director to guard us against this danger.²

15. So also must he abstain during the Exercises from influencing the exercitant towards one state or method of life rather than another, but must leave the Creator to act directly and immediately with His creature.³

16. But if the creature be assailed by any inordinate affection, or be unduly inclined to some certain thing, in any of the following ways, namely, to an object less good, or from less worthy motives, or to less worthy means for the attainment of even a good object, he must by prayer, by penances, and other means, strive to incline himself to the contrary, and thus correct his evil inclination.⁴

17. In the seventeenth Annotation the director is

¹ To spend a whole hour in meditation is often difficult; more especially if in a state of aridity; hence we must not be surprised at experiencing feelings of weariness or disgust, or an inclination to contract the time, or to interrupt it. If any change be made, let it be to prolong the time, even though it be only for a few minutes.

This lesson we may apply to ourselves at other times also, when pressure of work, indisposition, or any other excuse, may suggest the retrenchment or omission of our ordinary exercise of prayer.

² *Direct.* v. §§ 2, 5, 6; viii. § 3.

³ It is the Creator and Lord who gives the call; and who knows the circumstances in which He can manifest His will and dispose His creature for that kind of life in which He wishes him to serve Him. No man should be so rash as to intrude himself between God and His creature.

⁴ *Direct.* ii. § 5.

told to keep in view the state of soul of the exercitant and adapt the subjects of meditation to the various feelings with which his soul is affected.

18. In the same way he must consider the age, character, health, mind, and will of the exercitant, and the object he has in view, and then determine what will be the best exercises in which to occupy him. The nineteenth Addition refers to the same subject.

20. In the twentieth Annotation St. Ignatius strongly recommends retirement and solitude,¹ interior and exterior recollection, and a strict guard of the senses. This he urges for three reasons: first, because by it we gain great merit in God's sight, and engage Him more effectually to assist us; secondly, because the powers of the soul being thus less distracted will be applied with greater energy and efficacy to gain the end in view; and thirdly, because the more detached the soul is from exterior and sensible things, the more disposed it is to seek and find God, "Fuge, tace, quiesce." To fly from the ordinary scenes of daily life and occupations, to observe strict silence and to keep the soul in peace and free from solicitude is a sure means of finding God and His holy will.

These Annotations are of great consequence, and we should ever keep them in view if we would derive benefit from the Exercises. We should esteem them, for they have been approved by Holy Church: and the importance and benefit of them has been confirmed by long experience. We may finally summarize them thus:

¹ This solitude reason approves, for nothing is more opposed to the action of God's grace than the crowd of either persons or things. This is confirmed by experience and by teaching of Scripture and the example of the Saints, whether Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Virgins, or Doctors. In it "*prava corriguntur, parva nutriuntur, magna oblectantur ingenia,*" as St. Augustine says of the Scriptures.

In the first, we learn the *nature* of the Exercises; in the second, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth, the *way* in which they are to be given; and to *whom*, in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth.

We see the four conditions required in the exercitant, from the eleventh to the twentieth, namely, separation from external things, recollection, personal energy and effort; and punctuality to time and to the Additions, second, fourth, sixth, twelfth; generosity, fifth, thirteenth, and sixteenth; candour and docility, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and sixteenth.

Sometimes these Annotations may serve as the opening exercise of a retreat, of which the points might be:

Point 1.—The end of the Exercises.

Point 2.—The means of making them well.

Point 3.—The motives which should urge us to make them well.

ON THE EXAMINATIONS OF CONSCIENCE.

The examination of conscience is an essential exercise of spiritual life, by which we discover and correct whatever is defective in our conduct. Its importance is seen by the place which it occupies in the Spiritual Exercises, and by the manner in which St. Ignatius insists upon it,¹ and from its being an effective means of practising penance, of purifying the soul from sin, and of subduing the passions and keeping them in subjection.²

St. Ignatius places this examination of conscience immediately after the "Principle or Foundation" and

¹ Conf. Annotations 18, 19.

² Conf. *Instit.* p. iii. c. 1, § 11; p. 4. c. 4, §§ 3, 4.

before the meditations on Sin, because in its use we become acquainted with our own sins and failings, and are induced to purge and cleanse our souls from them, and to amend our lives,¹ which is our object in the first part of the Exercises.

He divides it into two, the Particular and General Examination, after the example of many saints and founders of Religious Orders, as St. Basil,² St. John Climachus,³ and St. Bernard;⁴ and for the members of his Society he prescribes the use of them twice at least each day, as a most efficacious means to obtain true purity of mind and heart and to hinder our falling into sin or becoming remiss in the service of God. Further, how important this rule is considered by his followers is evidenced by the Seventh General Congregation in its twenty-fifth decree.

THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN.

As to the Particular Examen, it is true that many holy and enlightened men regularly practised it; but St. Ignatius was the first who reduced it into form,⁵ and laid down rules by which to render it practical and really efficient.

Every one, however spiritual and devout, has some

¹ This examination, says Suarez, is most useful for the purifying of the conscience, and also for frequent confession. (Suarez, ix. c. vii. n. 5.) If, in the examination which we make twice a day, we refer our act of contrition and purpose of amendment to our next confession, it secures us against a danger in frequent confessions of making too light of an essential point in the Sacrament of Penance, namely, contrition. This is a custom much recommended, and practised with great spiritual profit by many pious souls.

² Serm. i. *De Instit. Monach.*

³ *De Obed.*

⁴ *De Vita solit.*

⁵ St. Basil in his shorter rules, No. 389, observes, "Quando aliquis in aliquo frequentius peccat considerare debet radicem, et ibi specialiter medicinam adhibeat, et in *singulis peccatis simili modo.*"

weak side or some predominant passion or special natural inclination, which is either the source of all his failings, or causes him to fall more frequently, or exposes him to greater danger. This is the true reason why after many years we often find ourselves liable to the same infirmities and negligences.

It is in order to remedy this deplorable disorder that St. Ignatius formulated this method of the Particular Examen,¹ and it is by the regular use of it that so many of the members of his Order have attained the highest perfection, as we read in its history.

He assigns three times for its exercise :

The first is, that as soon as we are out of bed and dressed, we resolve seriously not to give way to that particular fault or defect which is the subject of our Particular Examen.

The second is, that about the middle of the day we beg of God that which we *have at heart*, namely, the grace to remember how often we have fallen into the particular fault, and to amend it for the future; then we are to examine how often we have been guilty, reviewing each hour from rising up to the time of examen, and to mark down an equal number of points on the appropriate line. After which we must resolve with God's grace to amend between this and the next examen.

The third time, is after supper before retiring to rest, when we must examine ourselves in the same manner, on the time since our last examen, and after again marking down the number of falls, we must renew our sorrow and our resolution for the time to come.

The Saint subjoins two observations to render this practice more effectual. The first is that as soon as we feel that we have yielded to the fault or inclination,

¹ Suarez, ix. 6, n. 5.

we must immediately raise our heart to God to recommend ourselves to Him and to express our sorrow, placing our hand to our breast, yet not so as to attract observation. The second is to compare line with line, day with day, week with week, and see what amendment or progress we have made.

There is no sin or fault, though ever so inveterate, which we shall not overcome by the constant and punctual use of this means. With regard to this exercise two *difficulties* present themselves.

1. The first is as to the *choice* of the *subject* of our examination. This must be some sin, or, in default of this, some offence, or lastly, some deliberate negligence (*peccata, offensiones, et negligentia*), such as imprudence in speech, looks, actions, omissions, impurity, or want of intention, silence, uncharitableness, idleness, &c.

Sometimes we may find the subject by considering our good qualities. If we are of a sweet and mild disposition, does it degenerate into weakness or timidity? If we are of a strong character, does it make us hard, proud, obstinate, brusque, and domineering? And so of the rest.

Another way of finding it is by observing what we do with predilection, what troubles us, what excites us, &c.

2. The second difficulty regards the duration of our efforts and diligence in employing them. To obviate this, it is well to make it the subject of a resolution each time we go to confession. Also to change the subject from time to time, and thus revive our attention. Or again, we may change the subject by making acts of the virtue which is opposed to the predominant fault or passion; and this more especially when we commit the fault rarely, or the occasions of committing it occur but seldom.

Sometimes it may happen that owing to great care

In our early training and education, or to other environments, we may have no clearly defined predominant passion or habitual defect. In such case we shall generally feel drawn towards some special virtue, such as mortification, recollection, poverty, prayer, or some special form of devotion, &c., in which it is the will of God that we should acquire great perfection: and for this purpose, we must apply the Particular Examen in the same manner as we do for our faults, determining a certain number of acts of the virtue for each morning and afternoon.

THE GENERAL EXAMEN.

This is a salutary means of purifying the soul, and is useful in disposing it for confession.

St. Ignatius before laying down the method of the general Examen, makes certain useful preliminary observations on the subject-matter of the examination, namely, on thoughts, words, and actions.

As regards *thoughts* he observes that they may arise from ourselves and from our own free-will or may be inspired by the good angel, or suggested by the devil. Against the latter we must be ever on our guard.

2. When an evil *thought* suggests itself, or is suggested from without and is at once rejected, it furnishes an occasion for an act of virtue, which God will reward. If, when rejected, it again returns, and is as often repelled, the merit is correspondingly greater, as each time it is a distinct act of virtue.

3. As long as there is not consent, but only hesitation and a kind of half-deliberation or negligence, the thought will be more or less venial in proportion to the negligence or deliberation.¹

¹ "B. Ignatius loquitur præcisè de negligentia quæ non transit in consensum nec directum nec interpretativum. . . . Expendendum est illud

4. But if we give full consent to the evil thought, we are guilty of a mortal sin. If we put the thought into action, the guilt of the sin is augmented, and this for three reasons: because it involves longer time, more full deliberation and intensity, and at least in matters of the sixth commandment, often involves another's sin. In examining ourselves on our thoughts, we must not expect or even try to get mathematical exactness, but, as in all moral questions, must be satisfied with a moral certainty.

In regard to our *words*, the Saint lays down that to justify the taking of oaths it is required that they be *truthful*, and at the same time *necessary*, that is of matters of great moment as regards the soul, body, or temporal goods, and also that it be done with great *reverence*. And this is evidently more easy when the oath is based on the veracity of God Himself.

By an idle word is to be understood any utterance which is not for the benefit of ourselves or of another, in reality, or which is not intended as such; so that if our conversation be rightly ordered, it becomes an occasion of merit; if wrongly, it is a sin.

As to detraction, if we reveal any grievous sin of another we sin mortally; if it be only some fault or defect, we incur a corresponding guilt, unless it be justified by a right intention, or the fact is public and notorious. If we reveal the matter in order to protect others, or that the person may be corrected, or that others may be preserved from falling into the same, of course this intention justifies us, provided it is done prudently.

As regards *actions*, the subject of examination is the

verbum 'aliquantulum' et 'obiter,' quod idem significat ac subreptitiè et antecederet ad plenam iudicii et rationis animadversionem: quamdiu autem delectatio in eo statu durat, etiamsi aliqua negligentia interveniat tantum est peccatum veniale." (Suarez, ix. v. § 13.)

Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church, and the orders of lawful Superiors, care being taken to discriminate between orders and recommendations of Superiors.¹

THE METHOD OF THE GENERAL EXAMEN.

The General Examen embraces five points.²

Point 1.—St. Ignatius wisely requires us to begin with giving thanks to God, thereby acknowledging the many mercies we are continually receiving from God, and by confronting our base ingratitude and failings with His countless favours to us, we shall excite in our hearts greater sorrow and horror for them. In this point we should thank Him for His favours to Jesus, to Mary, to all the Saints, to all mankind, and then to our family and friends, and lastly to ourselves, even on the present day, particularizing them.

Point 2.—We are to beg the grace to know ourselves and see ourselves as God sees us, and that we may judge ourselves accordingly.

Point 3.—We then examine ourselves as to our thoughts, words, or actions, from hour to hour since our last examen, as hinted above. We should also recall the omissions of duty of which we have been guilty, as well as the abuses of graces received.

Point 4.—In the fourth point we are to strive to

¹ An objection is raised in this place against the doctrine of St. Ignatius, as if he taught that it was grievously sinful to take no heed of or to ignore the "pious counsels and ordinations of Ecclesiastical Rulers." As Suarez says, if we spurn or out of contempt violate the rescripts and regulations of the Rulers of the Church, it is certainly a mortal sin. But if we take no notice of them, such as of Indulgences and exhortations to gain them and the like, though it betrays an unspiritual mind, yet in the absence of formal contempt, we should not incur the guilt of mortal sin, unless thereby we were to cause scandal. (Suarez, bk. ix. v. §§ 14, 15.)

² Suarez, ix. 6, § 5.

make an act of perfect contrition, also to help ourselves by other motives to shame and confusion for the sins of our past lives, and also for the offences and negligences of which we have been guilty since our last examination, especially for those of our Particular Examen, and those against charity or our rules, or our spiritual duties.

Point 5.—Lastly, we renew our resolution of earnestness and fidelity in the service of God for the future, and to take special care to avoid those sins, offences, and negligences by which since our last examen we have offended God. End with "Our Father."

It would be well on this subject to read the *Direct.* xiii. and Suarez, ix. 5, § 13. It is a thing much to be recommended to refer these our examens to our next confession, especially the fourth and fifth points, as then we are always in readiness, in case of unforeseen accidents, to receive the sacramental absolution, and are less liable to grow negligent and indifferent in our preparation for confession.

Father Roothaan has drawn out the following method of examination of conscience according to the above points laid down by St. Ignatius, which is much to be recommended.

1ST PRELUDE.—*Reflect a moment on the presence of God.* 2ND PRELUDE.

—*Kneel and say a short Prayer, e.g., "In Thee and for Thee," &c., or, "Prevent, we beseech Thee," &c.*

I.—ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

O my God, I adore Thee, I praise and bless Thee, and I give Thee earnest thanks for all Thy benefits; first and chiefly for those conferred on the Most Holy Humanity of Christ our Lord, and on His most loving Mother; as also for those bestowed upon the Saints in Heaven, especially upon those of our Order and my Patrons, and for all Thy favours so liberally conferred upon the whole human race.

In the next place, I return Thee my thanks for all the benefits especially granted to myself, both as to body and soul; for my Creation, Preservation, and Justification, for the Sacraments I have

received, my Vocation to the true Faith, as also for N. N. (recall these ones).

Blessed for evermore be Thy Almighty Power, Thy tender Providence, and infinite Charity, which has proved itself so gentle, and loving, and liberal, towards me each day of my existence, and especially TO-DAY. In return for all these favours I offer to Thee, O my God, the praises of the Church Militant and Triumphant, and the merits of Jesus my Saviour, and all that Blood of infinite value, which He poured out of the *Wound of His Right Hand*, when hanging on the Cross.

II.—BEG FOR LIGHT.

O God of my heart, I beseech Thee, by the Most Holy Blood of Thy Son, which streamed from the *Wound of His Left Hand*, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to grant me abundant grace to *discover*, to *test*, to *bewail*, and to *correct* my sins, especially N. ; so that at the Day of Judgment, I may deserve to be placed by Thy holy angels, not on the left hand of my Judge, but on His right. O true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, enlighten my mind.

III.—EXAMINATION.

O Lord, how far have I gone astray from the path of perfection, although my Jesus hath marked it out for me by footprints stained with blood! How often have I again fallen since my last examination!

Particular Examen.—Make a review of each hour. On rising, or after the mid-day examen, did I recall the subject of it, and resolve to guard against it? Did I, when I fell, put my hand to my heart, in token of sorrow, &c.? Did I mark, compare day with day, week with week, month with month?

General Examen.—Rising, Morning Prayer, Meditation, Mass, Breakfast,—Special Duties of your State,—Purity of Intention,—Clarity in Thought, Word, and Deed,—Special Spiritual Duties for each day, viz., Examination of Conscience,—Spiritual Reading,—the Rosary,—Prayers of the Confraternity, &c.

Ordinary Actions.—Exactness, Fervour, Perseverance.

Rules of Modesty.—In Dress, in Custody of the Senses, &c. Worldliness,—Idleness,—Harshness towards equals and inferiors,—Gossip, useless Reading.

How unworthy am I of all the favours which my God is ever heapng upon me, of the graces of this very day, and the society and friendship of so many favourites of God. How many *sins*, *negligences*, and *imperfections*, have I again committed? How slowly

have I run in the way of perfection! May the Most Sacred Blood which flowed from the *Wound of the Left Foot* of my Redeemer, wash out the prints of my feet as I strayed away from Him, and from the path of virtue.

IV.—ACT OF SORROW.

Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, so that with Magdalene at the feet of my Saviour I may bewail my ingratitude, my negligence, and all my sins, more particularly N. and N. To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee! I am heartily sorry that I have offended Thee, O my God, who art the *Sovereign Good*!

I am sorely afflicted that I have provoked Thee to anger, who art my *Creator, my Redeemer, my First Beginning, my Last End!* I am grieved that I have preferred to Thee a thing of no value, for the sake of which I have displeased Thee, and thus *have postponed Thee, my chiefest and eternal Good*, to the most vile creatures. I desire to love Thee above all things created, and would rather lose all things created than even once to displease Thee.

I detest all my sins above all the evils of this world, *because they offend Thee*, and Thou dost abominate them infinitely. Oh! that I could grieve a thousand times more that I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I fling myself as a suppliant at the feet of Thy Son, and by the *Wound of His Right Foot* I implore of Thee to say to me as He once said to Magdalene, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Confiding in this hope, I fling myself entirely into the gaping Wounds of my Jesus, and into the ocean of Thy Mercy. By the merits of His Passion, I claim forgiveness from Thy bounty. Look upon me, and have mercy upon me!

V.—PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

O most loving Jesus! from this hour I will satisfy that fond desire of Thy Heart, which for me and my salvation was pierced on the Cross, and will correct my past sins and negligences, *more especially N.* Never will I again offend Thee, even in the smallest things, knowingly and willingly, my *Sovereign Love*. Confirm this my resolution by the merits of that Blood which came forth from the innermost depths of *Thy Most Blessed Heart*, and which, in union with Thy Life, Passion, and Death, I now offer in satisfaction for my sins.

My dear Jesus! I unite my poor heart with Thine, all wounded and torn. May *Thy Heart* be a hiding-place in which I may dwell

surely. My heart is ready, O my God! my heart is ready to make atonement for my sins—to adopt the means of correcting them, and of acquiring all the perfection of my holy state.

O God! be merciful to me a sinner. *Pater, Ave, &c.*

N.B.—Dwell on those words which are in italics, especially in the 4th Point, on the several motives of contrition.

GENERAL CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

Amongst the documents for the first part of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius adds one on General Confession and Communion, in which he observes that there are three advantages in making a general confession of devotion, during this part of the Exercises. The first is: that although he who goes to confession every year is not bound to make a general confession; yet by so doing he may be advanced in perfection and obtain greater merit, because of the greater actual sorrow for all the sins and depravity of his past life, which he usually feels in the time of retreat.

The second is that, the exercitant whilst making these Exercises apprehends more clearly his sins and their malice, and consequently has a more clear knowledge and sorrow for them, and therefore will derive greater benefit from it.

The third is that, thereby he is better disposed and prepared to receive Holy Communion, by which he will be assisted and protected from falling back into sin, and be kept in the grace of God.

Consequently let the confession¹ be made at the end of this first part.

¹ With regard to the general confession, it is always well to consult one's confessor or the director, as the exercitant cannot safely judge for himself. If one is about to enter upon a different state of life, or has been leading a tepid or negligent life, and feels that God by His grace prompts him to enter upon a new life of fervour, a general confession of one's whole

THE ADDITIONS.¹

Another document which St. Ignatius places before us in the first part of his Spiritual Exercises, is on what are called the "ten Additions," for the better performing of the Exercises, and the "more surely discovering of that which we must have at heart, namely, the rooting out of all inordinate affections and the finding out of the will of God in our regard."

Much of the success or failure of a retreat depends on the observance or neglect of these rules. They teach us what we have to do, both before and after meditation; and in this respect they do not apply only to the time of retreat, but to our whole life. Although they individually appear very easy and simple, yet to persevere in their practice, we stand in need of the grace of God, must have real good-will and must make personal effort. To be exact in their observance for a long time is an heroic act.

Addition 1.—When about to sleep, we must think at what time we are to rise and for what; briefly reviewing the next morning's meditation. The utility of this cannot be overestimated.

This thought at the end of the day, is like the coal put on the fire overnight; in the morning we have only to stir it up and it begins to burn brightly at once.

Addition 2.—On rising we must turn our minds to the subject of our meditation, in order to put ourselves at once in relation with the truth upon which we are

life is generally to be recommended. In other cases or circumstances, it is to be rather recommended to make a general review from the last annual or general confession, at least of those offences which have been more serious, or more frequent, or have given disedification to others.

¹ *Direct.* xv. § 19.

going to meditate and that we may be more intimately penetrated with it.

Thus for example in the first part of the Exercises, we are to feel a deep sense of shame and confusion, such as a cavalier would feel who, being convicted of a grievous crime against his Sovereign from whom he had received signal and extraordinary favours, was about to appear before him and all his Court, &c.

This feeling becomes us and should be ours everywhere and always. How precious its fruits would be! It would save us from innumerable faults and would impel us to serve God faithfully. Truly it becomes us; for how many benefits have we not abused? Benefits which we rarely recall, and more rarely ponder; although in our examination of conscience twice a day, we are reminded of them; such as Creation, Redemption, Vocation, Justification. This feeling is the prevailing one in the Holy Mass. Again in the second Exercise, we have to confess with deep sorrow that we are great sinners, and to imagine ourselves as criminals being led to execution. This two-fold thought is very truthful; for we are all great sinners,¹ even those who have never lost their baptismal innocence. In fact their preservation is not their work, but the work of God; and the fact of having committed one venial sin is quite enough to make one a great sinner; and if our good God had not prevented its consequences where might one be now?

Addition 3.—At a distance of one or two steps from where we are to begin our meditation, during the space of the "Our Father" we should reflect that we are in the presence of God, and should make an act of humble reverence; thus before prayer preparing our souls and not tempting God.² It argues indifference and irrever-

¹ "In multis offendimus omnes." (St. James iii. 2.)

² "Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God." (Eccclus. xviii. 23.)

ence towards His Divine Majesty to enter upon meditation without considering what we are going to do, and before whom we are going to do it.

Addition 4.—We are to take that position during our prayer, which will best help us to attain the end which we have at heart, and which shall cause us least distraction, provided it be one of reverence and respect; whether kneeling, standing, sitting, &c.

Addition 5.—If time allows, we should examine how we have passed the time of meditation. If it has been spent badly, we should investigate the cause and resolve to remedy it and repent; if well, we must thank God, and determine to persevere in the same course.

Addition 6.—We should divert the mind from all thoughts which are impertinent and not conformed to the spirit of our meditation, such as thoughts of Heaven, of the Passion, or Resurrection, when we are engaged in seeking to acquire shame, sorrow, and tears for our past sins; even though these thoughts may be attended by great spiritual consolation.

Addition 7.—We should for the same end, except when reciting the Divine Office or taking our meals, &c., shut out the light in our rooms when engaged in the first part of the Exercises. St. Ignatius makes much of darkness as an aid to compunction. If, however, it were to produce gloom and depression and contraction of heart, as might be the case with timid and nervous dispositions, of course, on the principle of all things to the end, this Addition must be waived.

Addition 8.—We should avoid levity or laughter, or saying anything with the intention of provoking it.¹

Addition 9.—We should also keep great custody of all our senses, more especially of the eyes, thus cutting

¹ "A fool lifteth up his voice in laughter: but a wise man will scarce laugh low to himself." (Ecclus. xxi. 23.)

as far as possible all distractions and obstacles to superior recollection.

1. *Addition 10.*—Regards penance, and in a few words gives us, we may say, the essence of a whole treatise on the subject. The Saint places it amongst the Additions, as it inculcates a virtue which purifies the soul, exercises a great influence on prayer and meditation, and is the price we pay for close union with God.

It would appear that the first Fathers of our Society drew more fruit from the Spiritual Exercises in proportion as they imitated the practice of St. Ignatius in this respect the more closely. So says Blessed Peter Faber.

2. The Saint first lays down the *notion* of penance, the virtue by which we destroy sin in our souls, and satisfy God for our offences. The internal effect of sin is to turn us away from God, the external is to turn us towards creatures. Therefore our penance must be internal by making acts of repentance and sorrow, and frequent resolutions to avoid sin and the occasions of it for the future; it must be also external, by the infliction of pain, to punish the senses for the abuses of which they have been guilty. The latter is the fruit of the former, but they mutually promote each other, and should be practised by all.

3. St. Ignatius gives us three *ways* in which we may practise external penance, and lays down a certain *principle* regarding it, by the application of which we shall avoid all extremes.

4. The first subject on which to exercise mortification is in our *food*; in which we practise it whenever we retrench from it what is suitable; and the greater this retrenchment, the greater and better is the penance; yet it must not be to the serious detriment of our health. This may be exercised both in regard to the quantity and quality of our food.

The next exercise of penance is in respect of *sleep*,

both as regards the length of time we give to it, and the nature of the bed and its covering. As to the time, it is well to take what is enough unless we have the vicious habit of taking too much. In respect of this, the same principle holds as in the matter of food.

The third manner of practising penance is by chastisement and infliction of pain on our bodies, by wearing of hair-shirts, or chains, or by using the discipline, and the like.

The more suitable and safest method to employ in this is to inflict pain on the flesh, but not so as to affect the bones, and thus to induce infirmity. This will be safely done by the use of disciplines made of whip-cord, which will cause pain and yet will not expose us to the danger of incurring any notable infirmity. And here again the same principle obtains. All these several ways of practising penance must be used prudently and with persevering regularity.

5. Lastly, we have the motives and reasons which should prompt us to this spirit of penance; which are, first, to satisfy for our past sins; next, to enable and accustom us to overcome ourselves and our inclinations; and, lastly, to obtain any special grace of which we may stand in need. Which of us has not a heavy debt to pay for our past sins, and for our present multiplied offences and negligences? How much there is yet to be done to reduce our rebellious nature to subjection! And in each hour we stand in need now of one grace, now of another, and this not only for ourselves, but also for others who are under our charge or direction. It is to be observed that if after doing all that in him lies, the exercitant does not appear to attain what he desires, it is often of advantage to make some change in his food, or sleep, or in his other works of penance, by relaxing them for two or three days, or by increasing them; but always with great prudence.

Often in this manner we obtain grace to know what in this respect is good for us and what we may practise in the future.

Again, during the time of retreat we should take as the subject of the Particular Examen, the manner in which we fulfil each duty, and observe these Additions.

THE RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS.

(More applicable for the First Week.)

1. St. Ignatius¹ here lays down fourteen rules, whereby we may to a certain extent become acquainted with the various movements of our souls, and thus may be able to accept those which are good and to reject those which are bad. The following are the rules which he assigns for the first part of the Exercises, and which are more applicable to beginners.

2. As they are of great use in spiritual life, and moreover as some rules whereby to know the different

¹ St. Ignatius, in the course of the Exercises, makes use of certain expressions, such as, *divine illustrations* and *illuminations*, the *feeling of different spirits*, of *rays of internal knowledge*, *movements of heavenly consolation*, and the like: and with reason, as they are based on scholastic theology, and are wisely applied to mystical theology. For it is certain that the soul experiences certain motions both of the intellect and of the will, by the preventive grace of God, and these are called by the Fathers, "illuminations, inspirations, and divine motions." (Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. and Psalm cxviii. and Romans viii.) It is moreover certain, says Suarez (*De Rel.* ix. c. 5, § 31), that these sometimes are immediately produced by God Himself (*De Inc.* disp. xvii. § 2), and often by our Angels Guardian. And on the other hand, the devil tries to imitate them, in order to pervert the will and darken or mislead the mind. (2 Cor. xi. 14.) The angels, however, can only influence the will through the intellect and the sensitive appetite, through either sensible objects or through the imagination.

These rules then are given us to help us to discriminate these several motions, and to determine from whom they proceed, whether directly from God, or from the good angel or from the evil spirit.

impulses and motions by which God or the devil are wont to affect the soul are necessary; and as the object of the Exercises is to lead us through a spiritual and interior life by means of prayer, in which we are liable to feel different interior motions or experience illusions, it becomes of great importance to be well acquainted and familiar with these rules as well for our own guidance as for that of others. They are founded on Holy Writ and on the experience of men distinguished for piety and learning.¹

3. The knowledge of these rules is of supreme moment for all who have to direct souls of every kind, if they would avoid notable mistakes in approving as good what is really evil or in hindering greater good. In this direction of souls two dangers must be avoided:² on the one side we must not believe every spirit, or take notice of every fancy that crosses the brain of excitable and weak-minded persons, following the counsel of St. John,³ "Do not trust every spirit," and on the other, we must not be too incredulous and bold in despising and rejecting what may be inspirations or impulses from God, but as St. Paul⁴ teaches, "Extinguish not the spirit, despise not prophecies, but prove all things, hold fast that which is good, from all appearance of evil refrain yourselves."

4. But no matter how good these rules may be in themselves, yet we must have recourse to frequent and earnest prayer, and by great purity of heart and union with God merit from Him light and grace rightly to apply them, and thus avoid the rashness and boldness of those who presume to direct souls, on what they consider the dictates of what they style common sense.

5. The many wiles of the devil, and the impenetrable

¹ Suarez, ix. c. v. § 30, &c.

² Suarez, ix. c. v. § 41.

³ 1 St. John iv.

⁴ 1 Thess. v.

of the human heart, are such that we cannot do more than form a prudent and probable conjecture regarding the state of the soul, though at times we can form a morally certain judgment. Suarez¹ says that these rules are safe and approved by the teaching of theology, and experience, and by the doctors of spiritual life.²

6. To descend now to a detail of these rules for the Purgative part of the Exercises, we may observe that they refer to the beginnings of spiritual life—when the temptations of the devil are more patent and open and are generally not under the appearance of good.³ They may be reduced to three heads:

(α) To the different methods made use of by the good and bad spirit, to affect and move us; ⁴ (β) to the explanation of spiritual consolation and desolation, and the manner of dealing with them; ⁵ (γ) to the different ways whereby the devil is accustomed to frighten, grieve, dishearten, and bewilder us.

Rule 1.—In dissolute and tepid souls it is the devil's part to inspire them with a certain false quiet and a joy founded on temporal prosperity and on the pleasures accruing from a loose life and from the gratification of the senses, thereby attaching them to worldly things, and confirming them in habits of sin. On the other hand, the Spirit of God is wont to sting such souls, causing them disquiet of mind and remorse of conscience thereby to rouse them from their evil ways.

Rule 2.—As regards those souls which earnestly desire to give themselves to God and to begin fervently to practise virtue, the devil is used to fill them with fear, to harass them with scruples, to perplex them

¹ Suarez, ix. c. ix. and c. v. § 41.

² Conf. Gerson, *De Prob. Spir.* tr. xvii. and Card. Bona, *De Discret.* c. viii.

³ Annot. 9 and 10.

⁴ Rules 1 and 2.

⁵ Rules 3 to 12.

with false and sophistical reasonings, to overwhelm them with melancholy, chagrin, and discouragement ; whereas God is wont upon such souls to diffuse light, comfort, and devotion, and by this means to encourage and strengthen them to go forward in His service.¹

Rule 3.—Spiritual consolation is the state and disposition of the soul in which it begins to be inflamed with a love of its Creator and Lord, and consequently feels that it can no longer attach itself to any created things for their own sake, but only in Him and for His sake ; or when, on account of its sins, or of the sufferings of Christ, or of other things connected with His service and praise, it pours forth tears out of love for its Lord. Or, in fine, when it feels itself vehemently pressed to advance in any virtue, such as in faith, hope, and charity, or experiences a certain quiet and peace of mind inclining it to prayer and to whatever will conduce to its spiritual progress.

Rule 4.—Spiritual desolation is marked by opposite signs, such as darkness of mind, disquiet, weariness, and loathing in the exercise of piety and devotion. This is often accompanied by a mistrust and pusillanimity, which renders us diffident, and alienates us from God, and is calculated to make us seek relief in transitory and sensible things ; also by an absence of feeling of faith, hope, or charity in the soul.

Here I would remark that we are sometimes inclined to give the devil more than his due by ascribing to him certain dispositions of the soul which are the result of our own morbid imagination, or which arise from some purely physical cause or infirmity, as from fatigue, or from the weather, head-ache, &c.

Rules 5 and 6.—In time of desolation we must not dream of making any substantial change in our state or course of life, or omit our good resolutions

¹ Conf. Bona, c. viii. § 3.

and works of piety. Some accidental changes we may make, as in a more careful examination of ourselves, in more frequent prayer, or in augmenting our penances, thereby to repress the violence and impetuosity of our desolation and baffle the efforts of the devil. Experience proves that these are excellent means of regaining our former fervour and consolation; but, to avoid any error on this point, it is safer to consult the director.

Rule 7.—In times of aridity and desolation, we must reflect that in leaving the natural powers of the soul without feelings of fervour and His special graces, but still always with a sufficient measure of grace, God intends to afford us an occasion of trial, and of greater merit; and that by turning to account the graces which He actually provides, we dispose ourselves to receive greater plenty of graces and helps.¹

Rule 8.—In the time of aridity and spiritual desolation, we must arm ourselves with patience and resignation to the will of our good God, and expanding our hearts with lively confidence in Him, we must wait in humility until He sends us suitable help and comfort, which we may be sure that He will in love and mercy soon do.

Rule 9.—The three principal reasons why God permits this desolation or withdraws His consolation from us are the following: first, because we are tepid and negligent in our spiritual observances, or secondly, to prove to us what we are worth, and what is our progress in His holy service and praise when His consolation and special graces and helps are suspended; or, lastly, to give us an intimate consciousness that of ourselves we can neither acquire nor retain real

¹ "Per naturales vires significari videntur naturales facultates, non tamen ut operantes per solam naturalem virtutem sed ut adjutas divina gratia et illi cooperantes." (Suarez, ix. c. v. § 44.)

devotion, deep love, nor any other kind of spiritual consolation, but that it is entirely the gift and grace of God our Lord, and that consequently there is no room for any pride or vainglory by ascribing to ourselves either devotion or any kind of consolation.

Thus God makes known to us our miseries, and thereby teaches us to know and compassionate those of others according to that of St. Paul.¹

When we feel no strength to walk, or are blind and cannot see, let us raise up our hearts in holy confidence and say, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and strengthen me with a perfect spirit."²

Experience shows that one of the greatest obstacles to progress in spiritual life is desolation of spirit, irksomeness, aridity, and darkness, by which many are deterred from giving themselves to God. If we practise these admonitions, we shall draw good out of evil, and God will also make with temptation issue that we may be able to bear it.³

Rules 10 and 11.—In consolation we must hold fast to humility, and keep our own miseries before us, and forecast the future time of desolation, bracing ourselves up with courage to resist it.

On the other hand, in desolation let us remember that with the grace of God, which is enough to enable us to overcome all our enemies, we can do much, and let us nerve ourselves by the thought of the future consolation which is in store for us.

Rules 12, 13, and 14 explain three wiles wherewith the devil is wont to add force to his most violent temptations:

The first is, when the devil, strong in his malice and fury, like some virago, tries to inspire us with fear and

¹ "Who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err, because he himself also is compassed with infirmity." (Hebrews v. 2.)

² Psalm l. 10, and conf. à Kempis, iii. c. 53.

³ 1 Cor. x. 13.

unanimity. Unless we treat him with scorn and contempt, his rage only increases, but if he sees that relying upon God we show a bold front, puffed up as he is with pride, he will withdraw in rage and spite.

The second of his wiles is when like a seducer he attacks us, covertly plotting our ruin. It is thus that a lover tries to allure the victim of his passion from the home of a good father, or a wife from her husband, binding her to secrecy and not to betray his plans, for fear lest his design be defeated. So too the devil tries to dissuade and prevent us from betraying his wicked and malicious frauds to our confessor or director, knowing that otherwise he is destined to be frustrated in his designs.

In the third place, as an able General who wishes to capture a citadel, first takes a careful survey to find where it is weakest and best open to attack, and then assails it, so the arch-enemy of our human nature carefully considers our state and condition with regard to the theological and cardinal virtues, also our moral disposition, and then exerts all his force against us on that point in which we are weakest. Let us be beforehand with him. Let us examine what is the virtue most wanting in us, and what is the fault into which we most frequently fall. This we shall very easily know if we make our examinations of conscience and our confessions with proper care. Then let us by prayer and the Particular Examination spare no pains to strengthen ourselves against his attacks, using those means of acquiring self-knowledge which are so abundantly supplied to us in the whole course of the Spiritual Exercises.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

WHEREBY A MAN MAY LEARN TO CONQUER HIMSELF, AND
MAY SO ORDER AND REGULATE HIS LIFE, AS NOT TO
BE INFLUENCED BY ANY INORDINATE AFFECTION.

In these words St. Ignatius begins his Book of Spiritual Exercises, and lays down the double end proposed, namely, complete conquest of self, and the perfect regulation of life, according to the principles of faith and right reason, for the attainment of his end and the accomplishment of his destiny.

He next makes an important observation for the mutual help and benefit of the director and of him who is about to make the Exercises, which is to the following effect :

“We must suppose that every good Christian will always be more ready to interpret in a favourable sense than to condemn any obscure or doubtful proposition of another.

“If, however, he finds that it cannot be held or admitted, he will in a spirit of love and charity correct him who has asserted it : but if this proves ineffectual, he will then make use of all suitable means whereby he may bring him to a right sense and save him from all error and falsehood.”

How prudent it was in St. Ignatius to place this observation in the very commencement of his book is manifest, for not unfrequently those who enter upon

Exercises may be imbued with false or dangerous principles or views either on social, philosophical, or theological matters. And on the other hand, the Saint who suffered so much at Alcalà, Toledo, Paris, Avignon, and Rome, from the false interpretations put upon various passages of his writings, may have wished to prepare the director and exercitant against any prejudices or misapprehensions under which they might be labouring, and thus suggest the surest and most profitable means of removing them.

THE FIRST WEEK.

PREPARATORY MEDITATION.

THIS exercise may be made to prepare and dispose the soul to perform the Exercises well, and to derive all possible fruit from them: to enable it to appreciate the special grace of God presented in them—to realize the need of them, and to inspire the fit dispositions which are required to succeed in them. These dispositions are, according to Suarez,¹ in the first place, a determination to seek the most holy will of God and His greater glory, and in the second, an entire indifference as to the means by which to secure it.

Hence whoever makes the Spiritual Exercises in earnest must not select those means according to his own genius and inclination, but solely according as God shall manifest His will.²

The meditation will consist of three points.

1. The excellence of the Exercises. 2. The need we have to make them. 3. The dispositions in order to make them well.

After placing ourselves in the presence of God, and making an act of faith and humility, as we prostrate ourselves before His Divine Majesty, we will offer up to Him all our thoughts, words, actions, intentions, and endeavours, desiring that they may be directed purely

¹ Bk. 9, c. vii. n. 6.

² *Direct.* ii. nn. 4, 5.

to His Divine service and praise, and to the promotion of His greater glory and to the sanctification of our own soul.¹

Prelude 1.—Let us in spirit place ourselves *alone* before the throne of God, the Supreme Lord and Master, who beholds us.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg with all our hearts that He would be pleased to help us in entering upon the retreat and in deriving from it the fruit of which we stand so much in need.

Point 1.—*Excellence of the Exercises.*—If we consider them in themselves, they are a doctrine inspired by the Holy Ghost, drawn from the Holy Scriptures, adapted to the practice of spiritual life, approved by the Holy See² as “replete with piety and holiness, arranged admirably to inspire the soul with holy dispositions, and most profitable to the interior man.”

They are, says St. Ignatius, “Spiritual Exercises to teach and enable a man to overcome himself and to regulate his life in defiance of any inordinate affection.”

They are exercises which will lead us to overcome self, and to determine our manner of life, without allowing ourselves to be influenced by any affection which is not approved by the teachings of faith or right reason.

We can then, if we really wish, learn once for all to overcome ourselves, and thus secure true peace of heart, and so arrange our lives as to acquire salvation—and all this without tormenting ourselves and without any interior anguish, no matter how strong our passions

¹ This method of commencing the meditation should be employed in the beginning of each spiritual exercise: and thus we shall comply with the counsel of Ecclus. xviii.: “Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as one that tempteth God.”

² Bull of Approbation by Paul III. A. D. 1548, of Julius III. A. D. 1554, and Gregory XIII. A. D. 1580.

or inveterate our habit: for under the guidance of God St. Ignatius has arranged all with the sweetest discretion, and supplied us with the most efficacious means of securing the end. In the first place we are prepared to banish from our hearts all evil affections, which when we have done, we shall be in the disposition to seek the will of God about ourselves and all our surroundings, and shall surely discover it. We shall then be able to form such resolutions as God will make known to be pleasing to Him. The Saint supplies us with suitable counsels by which we may be enabled to persevere, and with powerful incitements to avoid the snares and repel the assaults of the enemy. How many have entered upon these Exercises with souls totally enslaved to the world, to the flesh, and to the devil, and have come from them as completely devoted to God.

Let us realize the favour God is doing us in giving us this opportunity, and seriously resolve to turn it to advantage.

Point 2.—The *need we have* of this *retreat*.—There are some who think that retreats are only suited to Religious, or to holy persons aiming at high perfection. Yet they are far more necessary for those living in the world, where false maxims and bad examples and constant occasions render sin more easy, whereas the means of avoiding it are fewer and harder to find. Have we no past to repair, no present to correct and reform, no provision to make for the future? In the *past*, many and great sins, and perhaps no real repentance. Confessions defective, Communions doubtful or without profit, omissions, injustice, scandals, uncharitableness, and the rest. In the *present*, so little that is good, and that little so imperfectly done—prayer without fervour, devotions without merit, and sacraments without fruit. Preoccupied by the world as if

always to remain in it—what are our affections, and our actions?

Do not continuous dissipation, false principles, vain pursuits, uncontrolled passions and inveterate habits, and sins or faults without number, form the staple of our life? To know that we may die any moment, and to live for five minutes in mortal sin, is an unpardonable rashness. What, then, shall we call it to live in that state for months and years? And as to venial sins and abuses of grace, what a fearful account to render? In the *future*. Reason and experience proclaim our future, if we continue to live thus in the present. We can easily turn the bed of a river near its source, but if you allow it to continue its course until it becomes broad and deep, it becomes impossible. So is it with the sinner—the longer his life of sin, the harder it is to change its current. How many once better than us, are now lost! Let us dread to become hardened in our sins. “The hard heart will fare badly in the end.”¹ Let us follow the counsel of God, “Do, my son, what I say, and free thyself.”²

Point 3.—Dispositions for making the retreat well.

1. We must form a right idea of it—how it is concerned about the soul, and about our *own individual soul*. How it is to enable us so to dispose our lives that we may go on securely, advance daily, and finally reach our eternal home. Surely of all things this is the most important, and most vitally affects us.

2. We must go through it with great generosity of heart, and without reserve, leaving ourselves in the hands of God to do with us as He pleases, ever ready to grant whatever He may ask, and to make any sacrifice which He may call for. No matter how holy we may be, there is no one who enters on a retreat who is not called upon by God to make some *sacrifice*, either

¹ Eccclus. iii. 27.

² Prov. vi. 3.

for the correction of some fault, or for the acquisition of some virtue. This should be determined by each from the commencement of the Exercises, and with a view to the Election in the second part.

3. We must have full confidence and hope in God—knowing that no one ever hoped in Him in vain, nor confided too much in Him. Our undertaking is a hard one, and impossible if left to ourselves, but our strength is our hope in God.¹ The greater our hope, the more blessed shall we be; and the measure of His mercy will be according to our hope. “Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee.”²

4. We must have courage to face the difficulties which the devil will put in our way, and which our own sloth and cowardice will create. We need it, for we shall have to fight. “Be valiant and bold, for the Lord thy God is with thee.”³ God is with us, and with Him we shall conquer.

End with colloquy and *Pater Noster*.

THE PRINCIPLE, OR FOUNDATION.

In the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius lays down one great truth for consideration, which he calls by the names of the Principle and Foundation. Just as in every science certain first principles, too evident to stand in need of proof, are laid down, from which all its conclusions are developed and deduced, so in the science of salvation, all its conclusions are evolved from this primary truth. He also calls it the Foundation: for as in raising a structure, it is necessary to secure a solid foundation proportionate to the building which it is intended to support and hold

¹ Isaias xxx. 15.

² Psalm xxxii. 22.

³ Josue i. 9.

firmly together, so this truth is the only solid basis on which the whole moral and spiritual life can be securely supported. Hence it is evident how important it is for us to consider this truth deeply, and how necessary for us thoroughly to master it and bring it home. For as there is no science without its first principles, no solid and stable building without a foundation, so there can be no real development of spiritual life and no permanent fruit from the Exercises unless we are first imbued with this great truth.

Moreover, the more deeply the mind is impressed with and convinced of it, the greater and more solid will be the fruits which it will produce: and consequently no pains or time should be spared in imbuing ourselves with it before proceeding to the consideration of the other truths proposed to us later.

St. Ignatius does not propose it under the form of a meditation, or assign any special exercise or time for weighing it, but supposes us to dwell upon it as long as we find it necessary: but many advantages will manifestly accrue from presenting it under the usual form of a meditation.¹

We shall then divide it into three parts: and on each suggest certain practical considerations.

¹ This consideration our Saint proposed to himself and to his first companions when as yet they were in the world, and of course, as the economy of the Book of Spiritual Exercises shows, was preparatory to and the basis of the election of a state of life. For us, however, it is of equal importance, as the preparation to elect the degree of perfection suited to our state, office, or form of life in which God has placed us. It is with this view that St. Ignatius places this consideration as the opening of the First Week, "the Kingdom of Christ" of the Second Week, and "Two Standards" of the Public Life of our Lord. There is no preparatory meditation for the Fourth Week, as the election is supposed to be already made.

PART I.

"*Man is created, to praise, to reverence, and to serve God our Lord, and in this way to secure the salvation of his soul.*"

After beginning as in the preceding meditation, by offering ourselves and all our thoughts, words, &c., to God and humbling ourselves before him.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves standing alone before Him as the one great source of existence, the Lord of Creation.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg the grace to understand thoroughly this truth, and that our minds may be practically convinced of it; that we may know fully our end, and all that is wanting in us for its attainment.¹

Point 1.—"Man is created." For long years this universe has existed, with all its forms of life—but I was not in it—I was nothing. How did I appear? Who ushered me into being and life? It was not of *myself*, for from nothing can come nothing. It could not be mere *chance*, for that excludes order, and design, and permanence. It could not be, except as a necessary condition, those whom I call my parents, for they could not mould my body,² nor could they transmit to me a soul. Nor could it be by evolution, for it is against experience, and a first principle of reason, making the effect superior to that which is its cause. Nor can it be from any contingent being, seeing that they are only endowed with life sufficient for themselves. Then it follows that I must come from God. And this is what faith teaches.³

¹ "Make known to me, O Lord, my last end, that I may see what is wanting to me." (Psalm xxxviii. 5.)

² "I know not how you were formed in my womb; for I neither gave you breath, nor soul, nor life, neither did I frame limb of every one of you." (2 Mach. vii. 22.)

³ "God created man to His own image." (Genesis i. 27.) "There is one most high Creator Almighty who sitteth upon His throne and who is the Lord of dominion." (Ecclus. i. 8.)

Have I ever realized and brought home to myself this truth?

Point 2.—But for what has God placed me in the world?

Could He have created me for no other purpose or end, than stones scattered on the roadside?¹ No! An intelligent being could not so create me. Nor could He create me and leave me to be the sport of my own whims, as the peasant leaves his cattle to roam at will in search of food. All things else He has created for their respective ends, the sun to shine, the earth to germinate, fire to warm, &c. So, too, must He have created man for a special end; and the more so because he is the most exalted and the most excellent of the works of His hands. The infinite wisdom, power, and goodness employed in giving me the noblest of natures prove that He could not have created me for a life of mere chance, and without a rule and law proportioned to that nature. Since He has given me a mind capable of knowing Him, and a heart able to love Him, He cannot have placed me in the world as though He were nothing to me. Reason itself proclaims this. The fool alone can call this in question.²

It would be at once unworthy of both God and myself, and would argue the absence of wisdom, prudence, and goodness in the Creator.

Point 3.—Why, then, has God created me? For an end worthy of myself and of His own infinite nature. First, for His own glory.³ He has created every man for His own praise, name, and glory,⁴ and in accomplishing this here, I shall be rewarded with eternal life.

¹ "Remember what my substance is, for hast Thou made the children of men in vain?" (Psalm lxxxviii. 48.)

² "A vain man is lifted up into pride and thinketh himself born free as a wild ass's colt." (Job xi. 12.)

³ *Isaia*s xliii. 7.

⁴ *Deut.* xxvi. 19.

He needed not create me, but wishing so to do, I was bound to create me for Himself. His infinite nature demands it, and mine requires it.

Again, why did He create me? That in holy fear might keep His commandments; for that is the whole man's and every man's duty,¹ with soul and body, every thought, word, and deed, whether I be old or young, learned or unlearned, rich or poor. Then I am here solely for this object. If I fail to do this, I am worse than useless in creation, I am positively a nuisance and an incumbrance in it, a cause of discord in the harmony of creation.

In the colloquy I will express my grateful thanks for my creation, my sorrow for the manner in which I have ignored the objects of my life, and my confusion having been such a worthless servant.

End with "Our Father."

EXERCISE II.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION.

"And in this way to secure the salvation of his soul."

The commencement of this meditation and the preparatory prayer will be as usual.

Prelude 1.—I place myself on the verge of time looking on God on His eternal throne, surrounded by countless ministering spirits.

Prelude 2.—I beg of His Divine Majesty a deep and practical knowledge of the importance of my salvation and the grace to strain every nerve to acquire it.

Point 1.—"Man shall go into the home of eternity." After a life of a few short years on this earth, he must at last die and enter upon a new life which shall never end. This is only a place of passage, the other is called

¹ Eccles. xii. 13.

the *home*—and must be either in Heaven with God, or with the infernal spirit in Hell. There is no possibility of escape. Have I tried to bring this truth home to myself? That for me it is Heaven for ever or Hell for ever: honour, glory, and delight ever to be enjoyed, or to be lost or diminished, or disgrace, infamy, and pain ever to be endured and never alleviated. The price rests entirely with myself, and the price which I must pay to purchase the bliss of Heaven for ever is only to believe, reverence, and serve God for the brief space of my life. Once having entered on life, I must go on for ever, and there is no halting on the way.

Point 2.—What is the value of eternal salvation?

It may be estimated by two principles, namely, by the teaching and example of those whose judgment is unpeachable, and by its intrinsic nature and importance.

First, how have the wise and good and prudent valued it? Ask St. Paul¹ and the martyrs of Holy Church how they valued it. They will all reply that the tribulations of this life could not compare with their prospect of glory. Ask of the Confessors and Virgins, and with one voice they will reply that their lives of labour, of penance, of poverty, sacrifice, and detachment, are as nothing when compared with eternal life. Again, how does God Himself esteem it? The Eternal Father would send His only Son from Heaven, and would sacrifice Him to provide me with the means of securing it, &c.

His Son would become Man and embrace all which was the mystery involved for the same end; for this He established His Church and the holy sacraments, and offered the one great Sacrifice of the New Law. Then my own salvation is of mighty value.²

Again, we estimate the value of anything by its intrinsic worth and by the security of its possession.

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

² 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 St. Peter i. 18.

Now ear hath not heard, nor can man conceive the bliss, honour, and glory of eternal salvation: and it is secured for all eternity, and once possessed can never be forfeited.

Point 3.—We may judge its value also from the efforts of the devil to induce us to forfeit it. With what energy¹ and constancy he seeks to ruin us. With false promises of transient goods he tries to lure us from the way to salvation! Goods in themselves unreal, incapable of satisfying an immortal soul, and which it is beyond his power to secure to us even for a day.

Oh, then, my soul, see the value of thy salvation: and resolve to spend thyself in God's reverence, praise, and service; thus thou shalt gain it and shalt escape the fearful alternative.

Finish with a colloquy of gratitude, of regret for past neglect, and resolve with God's grace to have ever on your lips those words of St. Aloysius, "What is this for Eternity?" End with the "Our Father."

PART II.

"All other things on earth are created for man, and in order to aid him to gain the end for which he was created. From whence it follows that man must make use of them as far as they help him in this, and must abstain from them as far as they may prove an obstacle to it."

Having seen the end of man's life and being, we are naturally led to ask what is the origin and end of all other things on the face of the earth, on which man is so dependent, and with which he is so intimately connected.

And here I would observe that by "other things" we are to understand not merely creatures, but also circumstances of time and place and person by which

¹ "Because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." (1 St. Peter v. 8.)

may be individually affected: thus to be born in such a time, in this or that country, of such parents, in such a social position. Or, again, that we occupy this or that office, are placed in these or those relations and surroundings.

ON THE OBJECT AND USE OF CREATURES.

The preparatory prayer and commencement as usual.

Prelude 1.—I imagine myself alone, and from some high mountain taking a general survey of the world.

Prelude 2.—I beg of God to implant deeply and indelibly in my soul the practical knowledge of this second part of the Foundation.

Point 1.—With what an infinite number and variety of creatures the universe is filled! The heavens with its countless millions of mighty worlds, that look so small, and vary in size, distance, colour, &c. The air which like a great sea is filled with microscopic life, and supports life in the different forms of the vegetative and animal creation. What an infinite variety of vegetable life, of fruits and of flowers, and each provided with its special properties, shape, and colour. Then I behold the endless varieties in shape and plumage of the feathered creation, and all characterized by their individual habits. Next I pass in review the vast array of the animal creation. Lastly, I look into the small world of myself, which embraces not only intellectual life, but also sensitive and vegetative life. Further, it contains a mysterious connection with the exterior world by means of the five senses, of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feeling, and is endowed with the faculty of apprehending truth, of willing the good and of recalling the past.

Point 2.—Whence all these? Are they or is any one

of them the result of chance? Reason answers, No: for none of them which does not manifest and proclaim *design*. Are they the result of spontaneous evolution? No. For they declare themselves effects of preceding causes. They do indeed come from those which precede them as conditions "of their being," but they do not borrow from them their *life*. Whence then do they come? Only from Him who is the fulness and the source of all life and being—from God. They each and all have derived their life from the Great Creator. All are united with Him by the link of creature with Creator. All then are His sole and absolute property; nor can He divest Himself of His supreme dominion over even the most minute among them, although He may hand over to others the *dominium utile*, or the use of them, but only that, and no more.

Point 3.—Why then has He created them? Not indeed for any use or requirement of His own, being all sufficient in His own regard and from all eternity infinitely happy. Not again for the benefit of His angels; for visible and material things have no proportion with their invisible and spiritual natures. Nor could it be for the sake of the irrational animals, which are incapable of either knowing or duly appreciating them. It only remains then that they are created for man.

God created and arranged all this universe, great, varied, and beautiful as it is, and lastly created man, and placed all at his disposal.¹ Some as means for his support, others for the preservation of his health, some to relieve his weariness, and others for his pleasure and delight. In short, God designed them to administer to the profit, honour, comfort, and pleasure of man.

¹ "Thou hast made him little less than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast subjected all things under his feet." (Psalm viii. 6.)

Not for man to devote himself to them as his end and his all. To suppose this would be the part of a fool.¹ For material things cannot satisfy man's soul, nor temporal things content an immortal being: but they are provided for man to use them in the execution and attainment of that for which he is made, as the steps of a ladder by which he may ascend to his home, and the instruments to be employed in the service of his Master.

Point 4.—But how is this to be done? In different ways. (1) All proclaim the existence of God and disclose some one or other of His attributes and perfections, as His power, wisdom, goodness, beauty, providence, &c., so that to deny God is inexcusable.² All invite our admiration, love, and service of our Creator for His generosity, for the variety and number of His benefits, for His goodness, &c. (3) Some administer to life and thus assist us to persevere in His service. But to give ourselves up to creatures is to frustrate the designs of God, to become the slaves, not the masters of them.³ It is to cause confusion in the Creator's plans by making the creatures our end, and thus degrading self and insulting God, and incurring the reproach of ingratitude and injustice.

Point 5.—Conclusion.—If I am made to praise, reverence, and serve God, and if for this purpose He supplies me with the creatures which belong to Him, I am to make use of them for that purpose only, it

¹ "For they have said, reasoning with themselves but not right: Come before and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us readily use the creatures as in youth, &c. These things they thought and were deceived: for their own malice blinded them." (Wisdom ii.)

² "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power also and divinity, so that they are inexcusable." (Romans i. 20.)

³ "Who changed the truth into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen." (Romans i. 22.)

follows that my use of them must be solely regulated by the law how far they may enable me to fulfil this end, and that just as the artist makes use of his colours, or the artisan of his tools only as far as they help him in the execution of his design, so must I also be guided in regard to the use of all things.

Every thing and circumstance in this life is a means or instrument to help me to attain my end, either by the use or rejection of them. Some are always good, others are sometimes good, and sometimes bad, in which latter case they must be rejected; others are always bad, and by the rejection of them they further me towards the fulfilment of my destiny. We are not to be guided by feeling or sentiment, but solely by reason; not because it may afford pleasure, but because it is our duty,¹ must be our principle in every circumstance. In the use of the faculties of our souls, senses of our body, or of external things, this principle must be our sole guide. Conclude with thanksgiving to the generosity of God in the abundant means with which He has provided us; with confusion, at the manner in which we have perverted them to our own disgrace, and at our ingratitude towards Him; and with resolutions for the future.

End with the "Our Father."

THIRD PART OF THE FOUNDATION.

After seeing my own origin and consequent dependence on God, and also the end of my existence, and further the origin and end assigned by Him to all other creatures, it remains to consider what right reason dictates as to my disposition of mind and heart towards

¹ "Advise not with fools, for they cannot love but such things as please them." (Eccclus. viii. 20.)

them, and the view I should take of them in order to employ them always rightly. This is the third part of the Foundation.

“Wherefore it is necessary to render ourselves practically indifferent to all things created, as far as is permitted to our will and is not forbidden; so as not to wish for health more than for sickness, for honour more than disgrace, for riches more than poverty, for a long more than a short life; not desiring and choosing that which is suited for the end for which I am created, God’s praise, reverence, and service.” If we are to make use of creatures as reason inculcates, and only so far as they promote the fulfilment of our earthly destiny, we must constantly strive to promote in ourselves a practical state of indifference, so as to avoid being guided by mere feeling.

Why does St. Ignatius enumerate these four classes of creatures?

Perhaps it is because the generality of men find these the most difficult on which to be indifferent. Or it may be that all other things may be classed under these headings. Or perhaps it is that they are the chief objects in regard of which men harbour inordinate attachments most commonly.

St. Ignatius supposes not that we can make ourselves actually so indifferent that we shall not have feelings of preference or repugnance, but that we try to practice to act as if we were indifferent, without being influenced by either the one or the other.

ON INDIFFERENCE.

The immediate preparation and the preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Imagine self alone before God, the Lord and Master of all, conserving and directing all things.

Prelude 2.—Beg of Him a deep conviction of the necessity of this indifference, in order to regulate life properly and to proceed safely in the way of eternal salvation, in all circumstances in which I may find myself.

Point 1.—Its *necessity*. As reasonable beings we are bound to use creatures as means for the attainment of the end of which they are the means. This obligation is always incumbent upon us, no matter what may be our *feelings* in their regard. Now all creatures are purely means, and consequently must be used as such, totally independent of feeling, or of the pain or pleasure arising from them, which involves indifference. Again, it is unworthy of man to act simply from feeling. The brute creation have instinct or feeling to guide them, and in this man excels them, that God has given him reason as his guide in the *natural* order, in which respect alone we consider him at present. God in creating all things except man, had no preference for one more than another, as far as they are concerned, but only in proportion as they are more or less adapted to the help of man; hence our perfection consists in aiming at the same estimation. It is moreover a necessary condition of true peace, and of freedom from anxiety, care, and unhappiness. If I look back on the past and inquire into the cause of the many sorrows and pains with which life has been clouded, I shall find the explanation is want of this holy indifference. If

Why the saints, amid all their trials, sufferings, and persecutions, were always in peace and happy, was because they were practically in a state of indifference in regard of all created things considered themselves.

Point 2.—How far must this indifference extend? To all things, but especially—

1. To *Riches* or *Poverty*, to the conveniences of the one, or inconveniences of the other. And here we must observe that by riches we understand not only *material* possessions,¹ but also *internal* gifts, as *talents* of mind, *position* of heart, qualities of *character*, and the like, and by poverty the absence of many or all of these, also the want of accomplishments derived from education, and of personal attractions. Then, again, under the word riches are included *natural dispositions* to goodness and piety, facility to virtue, and absence of violent passions, as also special gifts of grace, and under poverty the absence of all these in a greater or lesser degree.

2. To *Honour* or *Dishonour*. Whether it be as regards rank, or station in life; whether from strangers, friends, relations, or enemies; whether it be public or private, in persons of high or low position—we must be able to say with St. Paul,² “I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound, . . . both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Knowing well how to adapt ourselves to all things, to be ready for all things.

3. To *Sickness* or *Health*, as both are means or con-

If we consider material possessions, qualities of character, intellectual gifts, and the like, objectively, and as they are in themselves, they are good, and are creatures of God; but subjectively, and relative to man, they are good or bad according to the right or wrong use he makes of them. To secure ourselves from the misuse of all these things, the great means is a state of practical indifference.

¹ Philipp. iv. 12.

ditions by and in which we can fulfil our destiny or end, and consequently it must not be a cause of anxiety or of undue care to avoid the one or secure the other. So, too, must it be with regard to a long or short life.

In short, this indifference must extend to everything which is left to our free choice, and which God has not prohibited or not commanded. It is clear that whatever is forbidden by the Creator cannot be a matter of indifference.

Point 3.—In the practice of this indifference, then, we must not consider the material side of things, but only how far they are adapted to our end for which we are created, and must employ them accordingly. Just as if I want to cross the sea I choose the safest and swiftest vessel, if I want to take a journey I take the best and safest route, so having a soul to save I adopt the means which are the most secure to ensure it.

This is true prudence, this is the necessary disposition.¹ Let us then be convinced of the necessity of this indifference and root out every inordinate affection in our souls; for it is only those which are the real obstacle to its attainment.

In conclusion, full of confusion for having ignored this indifference, in having thus constantly gone astray,² let us resolve for the future to secure true peace, and to repent for the past.³

What a folly it is to continue to harbour within ourselves a disposition which, not only closes the door of the heart against all real peace, but exposes us at

¹ "O that they would be wise, and would understand and would provide for their last end." (Deut. xxxii. 29.)

² "I have gone astray as a sheep that was lost: seek thy servant, because I have not forgotten thy commandment." (Psalm cxviii. 176.)

³ "For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou hadst surely dwelt in peace for ever." (Baruch iii. 13.)

... to become the victims of anxiety and misery!
 ... unworthy of a being who prides himself upon his
 ... son! End with "Our Father."

ON INDIFFERENCE. MOTIVES.

Whoever fails to attain his end, does so either from
 over-attachment to creatures, or from undue aversion
 for them; attachment to comfort, to pleasures of the
 senses, to riches, to honour, and to the esteem of men;
 aversion for inconveniences, pains, sufferings, labours,
 contempt, and trials.

It, therefore, is of vital importance to establish
 deeply and firmly in my soul such a perfect equilibrium
 and indifference, as to be ever ready to reject things
 that are the dearest, or embrace those that are the most
 repugnant, if it be for the benefit of my last end, and
 for God's praise and service.

The preparatory prayer and commencement as usual.

Prelude 1.—I imagine myself alone in the presence
 of God, as He is the Supreme Ruler and Director of
 myself and all things.

Prelude 2.—I will beg earnestly that I may appreciate
 only, and bring home the *motives* for making myself
 indifferent to all created things.

Point 1.—God's supreme *Dominion* calls for this
 indifference: My obligation in life being to praise,
 reverence, and serve God, I must strive to perform in
 all circumstances His ever-blessed will. Now this can
 never be as long as my own will is not conformed to
 His, which necessarily supposes this holy indifference.
 For He it is who has to determine the manner and
 circumstances of that service. He is the Master who
 commands, I am the servant whose duty is to obey.

So is it with the angels in Heaven. All are praising and serving God, some remaining in adoration before Him, others designed for the guardianship of men—one assigned to the monarch, another to his subject, one to the rich and learned, another to the poor and ignorant; and each faithfully carrying out the duty assigned him, and that *cheerfully, promptly, and unremittingly*. His dominion has no limit, and He has full authority to prescribe the manner of my service. As the potter can use the vessel which he has moulded for what purpose he pleases, so can God employ me; it rests entirely with Him.¹

He may place me in darkness, in sorrow, temptation, trial, and pain. It is for me to accept it as His holy will, and to thus fulfil my end. Or He may wish fortune to smile upon me, and honour and success to attend me; it is for me to resign myself and thus to serve Him. Well, then, I must acknowledge and bow down before His dominion. I must trample on all inclinations to rebel or murmur at whatsoever He may ordain. My only desire must be to find out His holy will and execute it, and must stamp out my own will.

Point 2.—The *Providence* of God requires this indifference.

When we are under one who is endowed with great knowledge and prudence, and who is inspired with great love for and great interest in us, we feel that we can abandon ourselves with perfect confidence, and without care and anxiety to him and to his guidance. Now that is my case; for is not God the perfection of infinite wisdom and knowledge? He knows all things and all their bearings; He knows, also, myself, and all the influences which everything in its relations to me would exercise upon me; how far they may benefit me or may prove unfavourable in regard of my last end.

¹ Job x. 10.

Moreover, He loves me with an infinite and undying love, with a love greater than that of a mother. He is more interested in my salvation than I am myself. He always arranging and disposing things and circumstances for my special benefit here, and for my eternal salvation hereafter.

Lastly, He is infinite power, the Almighty, without whose especial permission not the slightest event can happen, not even a hair can fall from my head, and He will not allow the powers of Heaven, earth, or Hell, to prevent man from fulfilling his destiny against his own will.

Knowing then God's providence in my regard, His love for me, the interest He feels in my eternal happiness, and His power to help and protect me, it would be folly and madness not to conform and abandon myself entirely and in all things to His ever adorable will, with perfect indifference to all things else. Alas! what a sad succession of anxieties, miseries, and cares, has my past life been. How truly may I say the way of peace I have not known. And all through my own fault, through want of this indifference. What a stranger has peace been to me, through want of faith and confidence in the loving and tender providence of God towards me.

Point 3.—The *Justice* of God should urge me to indifference.

If I do not submit myself to the providence of God and embrace those means which He supplies for the attainment of my end, I expose myself to the danger of falling into the hands of His justice. And what will be the consequence? I expose myself to a heap of sufferings. I shall and must suffer those sorrows and pains, that contempt and persecution which from eternity God has assigned me. If I am indifferent, and bear them in patience, I shall please God, who will

strengthen me with His grace, and will grant me peace and tranquillity and will sweeten the cross; but without indifference, I shall be impatient, shall disgust God, who will withhold all grace, peace, and comfort. I shall also lose merit and a degree of glory for eternity, and shall grow tired and expose my perseverance and eternal happiness to danger. Further, I render myself liable to many and grave temptations of anger, of despondency, of cowardice, human respect, pride, and neglect of prayer. I lay myself open to impulsiveness, self-willedness, dissipation, and to the lawlessness of unbridled passions. To overcome all these dangers, a special help from God is needed; but how can this be expected if, by want of indifference, I fail to submit myself to Him and to His dispositions in my regard?

Humbled at the sight of past and present want of indifference, in a spirit of shame and confusion, I will implore of God to grant me this grace for the time to come; and end with "Our Father."

With regard to the *impediments* to the attainment of indifference, they arise from one of three sources, of which the most common is the *imagination* and the *senses*. External objects act upon our senses, and these in their turn arouse the imagination. These phantoms, without number and often very vivid, assail the soul with such violence as to render it cloudy, confused, and almost paralyzed, and in a sort of way, fascinated, so that it seems almost to hear, see, feel, and know things that have no objective existence at all; and the thoughts of eternal good are lost in those of earth and of time,¹ and imagination reacting on the senses, excites them to

¹ "Wo to you that call evil good and good evil: that put darkness for light and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." (Isaias v. 20.)

go in search of gratification, dissipation, and pleasure, from one indulgence to another, until life becomes a mere circle of delusion and fraud.¹

Another obstacle to indifference, is the harbouring of false principles in the mind,² by which it persuades itself that things are either not bad, or at all events less bad than we suppose, and verifies that of the Royal Psalmist.³ It judges things, not according to their nature and truth, nor according to the teachings of Scripture, nor according to their reality and substance, but falsely and from appearances, according to the estimation of worldlings, forgetting what St. John has said,⁴ "that the whole world is seated in wickedness," that "the world is the enemy of man, and that its teaching is "earthly, sensual, and devilish."⁵

The last impediment to indifference is the heart and its carnal appetites. This body of ours is like a heavy weight upon the soul, wearying and pressing it down, and darkening it. It deludes and beguiles the heart, tries to drown it in material things,⁶ preoccupies it with cares of bodily wants, furnishes grounds for avoiding prayer and all those exercises by which the body is reduced to subjection, and so all order in man is turned upside down; thoughts, affections, actions, and all are ill regulated, and the animal part of man

¹ "For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind." (Wisdom ix. 12.)

² "And they themselves lie in wait for their own blood and practise deceits against their own souls." (Prov. i. 18.)

³ "The sons of men are liars in the balances, that by vanity they may together deceive." (Psalm lxi. 10.)

⁴ 1 St. John v. 19.

⁵ St. James iii. 15.

⁶ "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things." (Wisdom ix. 15.)

occupies the place in his heart which was intended for God.

If then we intend seriously to labour to make ourselves indifferent, we must remove these three obstacles. We must avoid acting from impulse, being guided by reason as intelligent animals. We must in matters of the soul, spurn the arguments of the world and of the flesh, and take a right estimate of things according to the teachings of faith and right reason, and not according to the judgments of the world.¹ We must put a rein on the body and a bridle on our senses, if we mean to be men of reason and servants of God.

We must fight against imagination, root out false principles, and destroy all attachments which are condemned by faith and right reason, and then, and then only, may we hope to secure that holy indifference which alone will ensure unbroken peace and happiness, and will enable us to proceed securely on our way to eternal happiness and our everlasting home.

THE FOUNDATION. REPETITION.

After having reflected on the Foundation, part by part, it is well to consider it now as a whole and altogether, thereby to impress it the deeper on our mind and heart; so that the mind may be fully convinced of the great truths it contains, and the heart may be more earnestly attached to them. One part gives force and strength to the other, and all together produce the effect of totally undeceiving us, and influencing us to form a generous and firm resolution to serve God and save our souls.

¹ "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

The beginning and the preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As in the preceding meditation.

Prelude 2.—I will pray with my whole heart that God would vouchsafe to make me see and know my last end and what is wanting to me.

Point 1.—"Man is created," &c. This is certain—revelation proclaims it, reason declares it, nature and conscience announce it. That God has given me a law of life is equally certain, and on the same authority. But what is this law of life? He has endowed me with the faculty of apprehending truth, and with the power of wishing and loving good, with the means of knowing Him and of loving Him. Consequently this must be the law of my life—a law and an end worthy of Himself and ennobling to me, to give glory to Him,¹ to know Him, to pay Him reverence and service here, and to possess Him eternally.²

What motives urge me to fulfil this law?

1. It is *just* to serve Him. I am from Him, from Him alone, entirely from Him, always from Him. I depend then on Him entirely. Consequently He alone has a claim to everything in and about me; and to give myself to anything else but Him is to be guilty of injustice to Him.³

2. It is *salutary* also to serve Him. It is useful in this life, for it secures true peace here. God has so ordered things, that our temporal happiness is attached to the promotion of His glory. And as to hereafter, we thus secure eternal felicity.⁴

¹ "And every one that calleth upon My Name, I have created him for My glory, I have formed him and made him." (Isaias xliiii. 7.)

² "Fecit Deus hominem ut summum bonum intelligeret, intelligendo amaret amando possideret, possidendo frueretur." (Augustine, *De cognitione vere vite.*)

³ "It is just to be subject to God, and that a mortal man should not equal himself to God." (2 Mach. ix. 12.)

⁴ "That all the children of Israel might see that it is good to obey the holy God." (Ecclus. xlvi. 12.)

3. It is *necessary* to serve Him. By not doing it we incur eternal perdition, and that through our deliberate fault, for, on His side, God has provided us with abundant facilities.¹ If we fail, it is our own negligence which we must blame.

4. It is a *glorious* thing to serve Him.² It is a glorious thing to be of the household of a monarch. What then to be engaged in the service of God? The angels and the saints, nay, even our Blessed Lady, had no higher calling.

Point 2.—"All other things," &c. Everything *outside* me, also everything in me—senses, faculties, the relations and circumstances of my life itself as distinct from my soul—all are means provided by God, but only for one object, as *means*, but never as an *end*. Then it is criminal to employ them in any other way. It is an insult to the Master, an injustice and a folly in ourselves.

As to the rule of selection, it must be *tantum-quantum*, that is, so much by how much—no more, no less. Those which help me to the end, embrace and use them; those which hinder me, detest them; those which are indifferent, abstain from them or turn them to good. Often it is not enough to abstain from indifferent things, we must do more, we must repel them; such as comfort, the "comfortable," ease, and convenience.

As to the rule of like or dislike, it is wrong and disastrous, for our corrupt nature likes often what it should dislike, and dislikes what it should like. Keeping our eyes fixed upon our end, let us draw the straight line *tantum-quantum*.

¹ "If thou wilt keep the commandments of God and perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee. . . . Before man is life and death, good and evil; stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt." (Ecclus. xv. 16, 18.)

² "It is great glory to follow the Lord; for length of days shall be received from Him." (Ecclus. xxiii. 38.)

1. This use of creatures is *just*. As all belong to God, who only allows us to use them for and in His service, it is injustice and dishonesty to make use of them for ourselves.¹ It is to imitate a servant who misuses the things provided for his employment by his master, or who presumes to throw them away without the owner's leave.

2. It is *useful* and *salutary*. To turn to creatures in search of contentment and happiness is to be miserably disillusioned, and in the end we shall die of disappointment and inanition,² the experience of four thousand years has proved it; whereas to use things rightly gives true peace, which the world cannot give or take away.

3. It is *necessary*. Otherwise we shall first be seduced and then betrayed. Our inclinations cannot be trusted, they tend to evil.³ The experience of the past should make us cautious and prudent.

Point 3.—“Wherefore,” &c.

Here we have the means provided by which we may put the second point in practice, and which contains the highest and most sublime perfection. To be in the midst of things, all of which are trying to allure or to repel us, and yet to resist the attractions and ignore the repulsions, by making ourselves practically indifferent. To what extent? Not only to the four classes of things which rule the world, but to all those special things which in our individual case we have found to

¹ Augustine, lxxvi.

² “The fear of the Lord is honour, and glory and gladness, and a crown of joy. The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy and gladness, and length of days. With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed. The love of God is honourable wisdom.” (Eccles. i. 11—14.)

³ “Take heed to thyself and attend diligently to what thou hearest, for thou walkest in danger of ruin.” (Eccles. xiii. 16.) “Follow not in thy strength the desires of thy heart, . . . for God will surely take revenge.” (Eccles. v. 2, 3.)

be obstacles, such as success in studies or occupations, talents, accomplishments; even to desolation, aridity, &c., in the supernatural order.

1. It is *just* and *reasonable*. God and the soul are the only two objects to which we should refer all things, which we must prefer to all things, and to which all else must be subservient. Again, we are such poor and blind creatures that we do not know what is good for us.

2. It is *useful*. It ensures us peace, calmness, and tranquillity. It cuts off as far as possible all occasions of sin, raises us above all human accidents into a calm region, so to speak, where agitation is a stranger.

3. It is *necessary*. Ignorant as we are of what will be of benefit or of detriment to us, we must throw ourselves on the providence of God, to be disposed of as He pleases; but this is impossible, unless we try to make ourselves practically indifferent.

Often ask these questions: What is the use of being healthy and then to be damned? What the harm of being delicate and then to be saved? What is the good of being rich and honoured and then to be damned? What the harm of a life of poverty and obscurity and then to be saved?

The means of gaining this indifference is the *vincentium* of St. Ignatius, which St. Francis Xavier constantly repeated.

End with "Our Father."

REPETITION OF THE FOUNDATION.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As before, I place myself humbly in the presence of God, the Creator and Preserver of me and all things.

Prelude 2.—I beg from my heart that He will, in His loving mercy, enlighten me to see more clearly my last end, and will inflame my will to embrace it more earnestly.

Point 1.—How reasonable it is that my entire life should be devoted to praise, reverence, and serve God, even though no rewards were attached to it, because I am all and always dependent upon Him!

We *praise* whatever is praiseworthy, as knowledge, goodness, beauty, power, &c. Now who is like to our Lord in all these respects? Nay, if any of these qualities are to be found in creatures, they are merely drops from the great Ocean of all perfections. Again, we *reverence* authority and power, even in a policeman, &c. But who is like unto our Lord in this respect?

Men pay *service* to others readily, and that for small compensation, and though their masters are hard and exacting, and look upon it as a duty. But where is there a master who exacts so light a service, and one so honourable, as does our Lord and Master? and who rewards so generously the easy service as does He? Oh! with shame and confusion and sorrow I ought to resolve henceforward to devote myself entirely to Him.

Point 2.—What is it to serve God? It is to do His holy will in all things; and not my own, which is at best nothing worth, and signifies nothing, and which

but too often is in opposition to the Divine will. Now this will manifests itself by *positive commandments*, which oblige under pain of mortal or venial sin; by special inspirations, by fortunate or untoward events, which also happen by God's special will, or at all events by His permission. To His special will or ordinations I am bound to submit, by every motive of duty, reason, gratitude, and self-interest. To resist Him and to rebel is to do violence to reason and to outrage my conscience.

Point 3.—How ought I to serve God? With *patience*, repressing my passions, above all, my self-love, self-ease, and sensuality. With *cheerfulness*, knowing that the labour is short and light, and that He whom I serve is a loving, and generous, and kind Master. By this constant and cheerful combating against self, I shall come to serve God in all, even the most trying, events with ease, and also by practice and correspondence with grace, I shall find it a loving and joyful duty, reckoning as of no account attractions and repugnances; and imitating the artisan, who in the use of his instruments is guided by their fitness to his work, and not by their intrinsic beauty and value.

But habitually to act thus, I must pay the price of absolute indifference and self-conquest, and must deny myself, and thus become a disciple of our Blessed Lord.

This must be the object of my prayers and of my ambition.

End with the "Our Father."

N.B.—Our meditations on the Foundation thus far refer to every man as such; that is, as he is an intelligent being, depending for his existence and the prolongation of his life on the pure and sole goodness of God, as He is the great Creator and Conservator and

the sole Master of all things. They regard man in the natural order, and the relations, duties, and obligations which obtain between man and his God in that order.

Since the coming of our Blessed Lord, man is no longer in the natural order, but through the merits of His Christ he has been elevated to the supernatural order, in which his relations are changed, and in which, consequently, higher duties and far greater obligations rest upon him. Hence we must apply the Foundation to man's *present* state.

THE FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIANS.

Preparatory prayer and commencement as usual.

Prelude 1.—I place myself before the ever adorable Trinity.

Prelude 2.—I beg earnestly to know my real position and the end imposed upon me, and why I am placed in this world in the supernatural order.

Point 1.—I contemplate the majesty and glory of the great God, as He has revealed Himself to me—the Ancient of days¹ seated on His everlasting throne on the eternal hills, all blazing with glory—thousands of spirits around Him in adoration, and their songs of praise louder than the roaring of the great ocean—the complete realization of all infinite perfections, wisdom, truth, power, beauty, goodness, and love. And who am I who thus stand before Him? Alas! if I look only at myself, I find my body full of many miseries, and as to my soul, my mind is dim and obscured, my heart wayward and depraved, my will weak and

"I beheld till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days sat: his countenance was white as snow, and the hair of his head like clean wool: his eyes like flames of fire: the wheels of it like a burning fire: thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him." (Daniel vii. 9, 10.)

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paralyzed, my memory frail and faulty. The angels are pure spirits and have the vision of God, and are enjoying the bliss of possession of Him, whom they praise, reverence, and serve¹ as their Lord for ever and ever. Yet I ask of holy faith again, Who am I? And she answers that I am the son of that Mighty Father. By Baptism I have been lifted up from the ground and raised up from the dunghill,² and must recognize in Him my Father really, and myself as His son by adoption, as Jesus is His Son by nature. Let angels rejoice in being His ministers, it is mine to revel in being His son by grace and adoption. But my soul! has He proved Himself my Father? A father must *tell* his love to his child—must *prove* it by *sacrifice*, and must *provide* for his later years—all this is required of a true parent. Has He done all this for me? Listen to the strange utterances of His love, “With an everlasting love have I loved thee, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee,”³ and “My delight is to be with the children of men,”⁴ and again, “Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee.”⁵ Strange language. But what sacrifices has He made for me? He did not rest content to sacrifice one of His spirits, but sent His well-beloved Son and subjected Him to all that is involved in His Incarnation, Passion, and Death, that thereby He might make me partaker of His Divine Nature, heir to His own glory, and provide a crown, throne, and sceptre for me in Heaven, my true Home. My God! what a title of nobility is mine! What a Father is mine in Heaven! Meanwhile, what am I to do on earth? Praise Him! Yes; but with all the eloquence of word and action. Reverence Him! Yes!

¹ “Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power: because Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were and have been created.” (Apoc. v. 11.)

² Psalm cxii. 7.

³ Jerem. xxxi. 3.

⁴ Prov. viii. 31.

⁵ Psalm ii. 7.

with all the filial reverence of a child towards such a Mighty Father. Serve Him and waste myself in His service. But all this must be animated by a spirit of love, a filial spirit.

Point 2.—Looking again with the eye of faith, I see the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Equal to the Father in wisdom, power, beauty, knowledge, goodness, and love. God of God, Light of light. Him, too, the hosts of Heaven are adoring as their Lord and King. Faith bids me recognize in this beautiful and eternal Being my own Brother. My God! Can it be? It is written: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated, to be made conformable to the image of His Son: that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren."¹

He said a creative word, and by it all things were made; a second time He uttered a creative word when He transubstantiated bread into His Blessed Body. His third creative utterance was on the Cross, when He said, Woman, behold thy son, and to the disciple, Behold thy Mother. By the first He unites the creature to the Creator, by the second He superadds the stronger bond of grace, by the third He completes the family tie between us and Himself, for besides the same Father, He creates Mary, our real Mother, thus making us His brethren. And what love of brother is like His? He shares His inheritance with us, for we are "co-heirs with Him," He feeds us with His own Flesh and Blood, and is ever and everywhere renewing His Life for our sakes, and to be near us in His Mystical Life.

Oh! surely there is no need to tell us that as He wastes Himself for us,"² we ought to consume ourselves in praising, reverencing, and serving Him:

Romans viii. 29.

"Totus Christus impensus est in nostros usus." (Augustine, Serm.

but again in a spirit of devoted love—thus fulfilling the great commandment of the law, “Thou shalt love,” &c.¹ He is my Brother, and my model of brotherly love. Wo to me if I have not the spirit of Jesus, His sweetness and His zeal for His Father’s glory, and to carry out His holy will. Wo to me if whilst professing myself to be His brother, I belie it by my conduct.

Point 3.—Again, faith points to a Third Person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son; proceeding from them, the outcome of their mutual love. Now, how am I connected with Him? The Apostle Paul tells me, “You are the temple of the Holy Ghost,”² and in the Council of Florence we find that the Fathers explained these words as expressing the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit³ by a kind of mystico-hypostatic union. As long as we do not banish Him by sin, He is always within us, helping us and adorning our souls with fresh gifts and graces, supporting us by frequent inspirations of mind and aspirations of heart, imparting fresh fruits of His holy presence, and strengthening us in our combats against the world, the flesh, and the devil. What, then, is my duty in His regard? How ought I to despise all things of earth, how perfectly indifferent should I be, remembering that my heart is a sanctuary consecrated to the Blessed Trinity, and is not to be sullied by earthly and carnal things.

My duty is to observe the commandments of God and of His Church, and the maxims of the Gospel, to walk worthily in the footsteps of Christ, and not to degenerate from the high thoughts of a son of God.

“Our Father.”

¹ St. Matt. xxii. 37. ² 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19.

³ Bessarion, in the Council of Florence.

THE END OF THE PRIEST.

By way of repetition of the Foundation and its application to the priesthood, the following points might be usefully proposed.

After the usual commencement and preparatory prayer,

Prelude 1.—Imagine myself in the presence of Jesus, the great High Priest.

Prelude 2.—Beg earnestly to know my obligations as a priest, and the means I must employ to fulfil them worthily, and grace to put them in practice.

Point 1.—What is a priest? He is truly a man of God by the *character* with which he is invested; by the *powers* given him, which are greater than those of the angels, or of our Blessed Lady herself; he is the representative of Jesus Himself, having power over His Body, real and mystical; he is ambassador of the Church in the recitation of the Divine Office; he is co-operator with Jesus: he is *judge, doctor, and Father* of the people in the supernatural order: he is holder of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. What dignity can be compared with this! What are all earthly powers, which after all can only reach and affect the body when put in comparison with those of the priesthood, which immediately regard the soul? And this dignity and power are conferred on weak and frail man! Truly the words of the Psalmist are verified: "He hath raised up the needy from the earth, and lifted up the poor out of the dunghill that He may place him with princes, with the princes of His people."¹

Point 2.—What ought to be his sanctity? His soul and his body, his actions, in fact everything should be

¹ Psalm cxii. 7, 8.

holy. Surely he should always have in view the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and being a sort of continuation of the Incarnation, should embrace labours, humiliations, and the Cross like Jesus. He should be dead to the world, to pleasure and honour, and accept patiently, if he cannot love, contempt, sufferings, and sacrifice, and cherish solitude and recollection, and should with the Apostle¹ regard all else but as *stercora*. How holy should be those hands which daily take hold of the infinitely holy flesh of Jesus—how holy that tongue on which He deigns to repose, and which is washed with His Sacred Blood! How pure should be that body, how spotless that mind and heart that are each day made one with the thrice-holy Son of God.

Point 3.—What are the means by which he may fulfil his end?

In the first place, the priest must be a man united to God by prayer. His work being supernatural, and affecting the souls of men, must derive all its efficacy from God, and from His holy grace, for the obtaining of which he must pray. By mental prayer he must form and mould his mind and heart after the model set him by Jesus Christ. He must pray with his lips in reciting the Divine Office with attention, devotion, and reverence; in offering up the Holy Mass with great recollection, humility, and love. In the administration of the sacraments he must unite himself in spirit with Him whom he represents; with Jesus, patient, merciful, and gentle in the sacred tribunal; with Jesus, loving and self-sacrificing in administering Holy Communion; with Jesus, labouring and going about doing good in visiting the sick, the poor, and the afflicted, &c.

In general, the more he avoids all commerce with the world, except in his official capacity, the closer will be his union with Christ, the greater will be his influence

¹ Philipp. iii. 8.

for good over the minds and hearts of others, the more perfectly will he fulfil his end.

By his example as well as by his words, he must preach detachment from all earthly things, and inculcate attachment to God alone and to His holy service. If he neglects to employ these means, how will the world condemn him at the Last Day, and what a terrible account will he have to render to the justice of God.

THE END OF THE RELIGIOUS.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves in presence of our Lord, who addresses us in those words: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, life everlasting."¹

Prelude 2.—Let us beg what we must earnestly desire, that our Creator and Lord will enlighten our minds to see the real nature of our vocation, that we may duly appreciate its excellence, and its end, and that He will guide and strengthen our wills to regulate our lives accordingly.

Point 1.—The nature of the religious state.

The religious state is that in which its members are bound to tend to perfection by the observance of religious vows and of the rules and constitutions proper to its Institute. The essence of religious life consists in the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. For the very name "Religious" denotes one who is in a special manner consecrated to God, given over to His special worship, and consequently one who renounces all those things which are calculated to withdraw

¹ Romans vi. 22.

human nature from Divine things and attach it to this world, "to the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."¹ Now this is effected by the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, in some Order whose constitutions and rules are approved and confirmed by the authority of Holy Church."²

From this, then, we see that a Religious, by virtue of his state, is bound to tend to perfection, not merely in the observance of the ten commandments, but also in the fulfilment of the obligations incurred by the three religious vows, and by the rules or constitutions of the Order of which he is a member. By the vow of poverty he voluntarily renounces all personal proprietorship, or "dominion" over all earthly things or possessions.

By his vow of chastity he voluntarily renounces all external acts of luxury, and all deliberate consent to or desires of the same, and that under pain of sacrilege.

By his vow of obedience he voluntarily despoils himself of his own judgment and will, in favour of the judgment and will of Christ our Lord, as notified to him by his Rule or by the Superior canonically appointed to rule over him.

Let us thank God for His infinite love and mercy in calling us to this exalted state; for having chosen us out of thousands more fitted and more worthy of such a special grace, and let us pray that we may "see our vocation," and in all things walk worthy of it.

Point 2.—For what end does the "Religious," in addition to the observance of the commandments common to all Christians, further bind himself to the observance of the Evangelical Counsels, and of the rule of the Institute of his Order?

It is, that thereby he may more *securely* fulfil the end for which he is created, namely, to praise God,

¹ 1 St. John ii. 16.

² Suarez, *De Rel.* c. ii.

reverence Him, and to serve Him ; also that he may do this more *perfectly*, being protected by greater safeguards, and helped by greater graces ; and at the same time may pursue his end with greater *constancy* and ever-increasing fervour. He must praise God in mind and heart by mental and vocal prayer, by the good example which he gives, and by these and other means prescribed in his Institute, must draw others to join him in this service of praise, according to that of the Psalmist : " Let every spirit praise the Lord." ¹ He must in his own person, by the observance of exterior modesty, show extraordinary reverence towards God, as the Apostle counsels : " Let your modesty be known to all men, for the Lord is nigh." ² And according to His Rule, by word and example he must draw others to manifest a kindred reverence to God. His service of God must be marked by more than ordinary Christian devotedness, nor will the mere observance of the ten commandments suffice. For a Religious to rest content with this, would argue rapine in a holocaust, insincerity in his profession, would seriously imperil his vocation, and probably would end in the forfeiture of the grace of final perseverance.

He who professes complete detachment from *riches*, and the comforts or conveniences attendant on wealth ; from *pleasures*, even those that in themselves are not forbidden by the law of God ; and from the *honour* and *praise* of men, does not satisfy his obligations by living the life of good Christians in the world. He is bound to aim higher, must strive to excel and distinguish himself in the praise, reverence, and service of his Master and Lord, as one animated by the spirit of the love of God, to whom he is consecrated in body and soul. Alas ! how often are we inclined to forget this our engagement ! How many of us will find to our

¹ Psalm cl. 5.

² Philipp. iv. 5.

confusion, on the great day of the Lord, that notwithstanding all the graces which we have received in the course of our religious life, we have fallen far short of the perfection attained by persons in the world who have not received such graces! How rarely have we earnestly striven to realize in ourselves the ideal of religious perfection! And yet it is for this that Holy Church has consecrated us to God, and has accepted our sacrifice. It is as such that we are regarded by the world; it is on this ground that even our bodies are held sacred. To neglect to aim at this perfection is to sail under false colours, and in our daily lives to play the hypocrite.

Point 3.—What are the means for the attainment of our end?

(*a*) We must not only live as though practically indifferent to all things created, in the full sense of the words, but must also strip ourselves of them as far as is consistent with the letter and spirit of our rules, only making use of them, as far as is necessary for God's glory or service, in the true spirit of poverty.

(*β*) We must renounce all comforts, conveniences, and indulgences that flatter human nature or the animal man, and that in a Religious are hardly consistent with the perfection of the second vow.

(*γ*) We must lay aside our own judgment and will, and assume the will and judgment of Christ our Lord, which is manifested to us, in all the circumstances of our life, by our rules, or by the orders of the Superior whom God has appointed over us. To this we are pledged by our vow of obedience.

(*δ*) In order that we may duly and constantly make use of these means, we absolutely require the help of God, which can only be secured by prayer. Hence the necessity of exactness and fidelity in all spiritual duties, prescribed by rule, both as regards the time and the

manner of performing them. The Religious who fails in the employment of this means, or is negligent in using it, will fail in his vocation, or will lead a negligent and tepid life, whereas he who is faithful to prayer will serve God with fervour. The former will be a stranger to peace of soul, real happiness, and will endanger his vocation; the latter "will run in the way of God's service with a dilated heart."¹

Let us, with St. Bernard, often put the question to ourselves, *Ad quid venisti?* Why have we entered religious life? To die to all that is not God, to live only to Jesus Christ, to praise Him, reverence Him, and serve Him, not in any ordinary manner, but according to the very letter and spirit of our Rule. Or again, with St. Aloysius, let us say, *Quid hoc ad aeternitatem?* How does this profit for eternity? How will it advance our everlasting interests? How does it fit in with our vocation here, and our glory hereafter?

In our colloquy we will humble ourselves at the sight of our many infidelities to grace and to our high vocation; we will thank His Divine Majesty for having called us to His special service, and will resolve, with His grace, to labour henceforth more earnestly to imbibe the true spirit of our Institute, and fulfil the end proposed to us in our holy calling.

End with "Our Father."

ON SIN.

If we have made the meditations on the Foundation with any fruit, we must be convinced of the necessity of overcoming self, and of rooting out all inordinate affections, that we may make a right use of creatures in the service of God and to the salvation of our souls.

¹ Psalm cxviii. 32.

In order to stimulate the will to make this necessary resolution, St. Ignatius proposes for our consideration the disorder there is in the wrong use of creatures, and the dreadful effects induced by it, as we see them in three instances, namely, in the sin of the angels, in the prevarication of our first parents, and lastly, as holy faith teaches, in the case of a man who dies after his first mortal sin not repented of.

1. By this consideration the Saint supposes that we shall be struck with a holy fear of God, and shall be led to a sincere sorrow for our many sins, and to a true repentance and change of life.

2. This exercise will enable us to discover what passion or vice principally has diverted us from the service of God and may expose us to forfeit our salvation. In the angels it was pride, in Adam it was, at least partially, sensuality; in man it may be either of these; or avarice, hatred, envy, &c. What disordered affection might it be in my case? Experience of the past should make me careful for the future, and determine me boldly and without compromise to eradicate it. In our acts of sorrow for our sins it is well to enter into particulars, and to express our detestation and horror of those which have been the root and cause of all the rest.

3. We should also in our acts of contrition include all our venial sins, for from these often may be traced great injury to the soul.

4. In the first part of the Exercises St. Ignatius proposes to excite in us regret for our past sins, in order to prepare us to enter upon an altogether new life. The three fundamental exercises, namely, the meditation on "Three Sins," on "Our own Sins," and the contemplation on Hell concur admirably to this result. By the first we are excited to shame and confusion; by the second, to hatred and abhorrence of sin; by the

third, to a resolution and firm purpose to avoid sin at all cost. To these three must be added sorrow for having offended God, who is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely good to us, that the sinner may elicit an act of contrition. Inferior motives of sorrow, such as the vileness of sin, fear of Hell, or of other punishments inflicted by God upon sin, suffice for attrition or imperfect contrition, which, however, is not sufficient to justify the soul without the Sacrament of Penance.¹

ON THREE SINS.

The first case is that of a single sin, without either time or grace for repentance being granted. In the second case, full time and grace were given, and severe satisfaction was exacted in this life for nine hundred years, and above three thousand years in Limbo. In the third, advantage was not taken either of time or grace, and eternal torments are the result. All three show the malice of sin. Its malignity is shown by the goods of which it deprives the sinner, and by the evils which it induces.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I may imagine my soul as it were imprisoned in the dungeon of my body of corruption; and both body and soul consigned to drag on a miserable existence in the midst of the brute creation, in the desert and far removed from the haunts of men.

Prelude 2.—I will beg the grace of profound shame and confusion at the sight of so many who are lost for a single mortal sin, and of more, for far fewer sins than I have committed, and of how often I have deserved the same punishment for my many sins.

¹ Conc. Trid. s. xiv. c. 4.

Point 1.—The Sin of the Angels.—God created a mighty host of spirits, and endowed them with wonderful gifts of nature and of grace, designing them after proving their loyalty and faithful service, to enjoy with Him eternal glory as a reward. For this He endowed them with keen and powerful intelligence, and with a corresponding faculty of love. Unlike us they had no material bodies to impede or encumber their souls, and were adapted to see clearly and to love intensely the great Ruler of the spirit world. But to merit their heavenly glory they must prove their loyalty and fidelity to God their Creator by acknowledging their dependence. One-third of that mighty host refused, and in the instant, without any time for repentance, they were hurled in wild confusion into the abyss of fire lighted up by the breath of an angry God.

Who chastises? The God of infinite *justice*, who cannot punish unduly; of infinite *mercy*, whose punishment never equals the deserts; of infinite *wisdom*, who cannot be mistaken; of infinite *sanctity*, and who could not therefore punish unreasonably or prompted by passion.

The criminals were angels, noble spirits, most exalted and vast in number! And all this for one single sin, of thought and of a moment. The punishment is total ruin; their mind twisted away from truth to falsehood; their wills perverted and capable only of hate, drowned in a sea of woes, and for eternity deprived of rest, peace, or comfort.

And what must I think, then, of myself, my sins of thought, of word, and of deed, so awful in number, so degrading to my very nature. And yet I am left unscathed as yet, and overpowered with grace. Each of their sins has made a devil, and yet all mine have been unpunished till now.

Colloquy.—In my shame I should be overwhelmed,

but yet more overpowered with gratitude for God's excessive goodness and mercy. I will say with St. Anselm: "Heu peccatum nomen horrendum! res detestabilis, nulli malo comparabilis!" Who can hate it duly? Grant, O God, that in future I may fly from it with horror, and fill my soul with shame for all my black ingratitude.

Point 2.—To fill up the void of the rebel angels, God in His love and mercy creates man. He forms out of dust a body, and breathes into it a soul, and thus creates Adam, endowing his soul with original justice and sanctifying grace, and with great wisdom, and places him in the Garden of Eden; and from one of his ribs he also forms Eve, to be a companion, a sharer in his bliss, and also to be the mother of all the living. He confers on them the preternatural gifts of immunity from sickness, suffering, concupiscence, and death; designing them, after praising, reverencing, and serving Him for a time, to pass into the eternal enjoyment of Himself in Heaven.

But this they must merit by giving Him the glory of free service; and for this end, God allows them the full use of all things in Paradise except one: they must prove their loyalty and fidelity by abstaining from the fruit of one tree. The devil, the spirit of envy, hatred, and lying, allures Eve, who in turn induces Adam to eat; they sin. And God banishes them from the Garden, condemns them to nine hundred years of sorrow and misery, and last of all to death and to a long confinement in Limbo. What is the result and the fearful consequence of this sin?

The all-just, all-merciful, all-holy God at once withdraws from them supernatural life and His preternatural gifts, leaving them only their human nature, maimed and wounded, so to speak, in the blindness of their intellect and hardness of heart, not understanding their

condition or detesting their crime, unless God may please in His mercy and love to give them fresh grace. Thus Adam and all his posterity are condemned to pains, infirmities, sickness, and death of the body, to corruption, ignorance, rebellion of the passions and appetites of the soul, repugnance to good, inclination to evil. From this sin we trace all the calamities, public and private, which for sixty centuries have since afflicted humanity—the curse of God like a miasma spread over all nature, and impregnated the very earth and the waters of the sea; this endures even still as fresh as ever.

Consider, too, the terrible history of humanity ever since; and in spite of the Death of Jesus Christ, the eternal perdition of so many unfortunate men and women carried down into the abyss by the miserable inclination we have to evil since the Fall.

What, then, should I think of myself? Adam committed but one sin—how many have mine been! He had no experience of God's justice; I am surrounded by examples of it, and feel them within myself. He was punished at once, but I am as yet unscathed, with innumerable graces ever being heaped upon me. Were it not for these, I should be carried along like so many thousands from sin to sin, until absorbed in the abyss of everlasting perdition.

Alas! into what disgrace have I fallen! In sin I was born, but Thou, my God, didst cleanse me; again I soiled myself still more, and that with full deliberation! Alas! what fearful punishments await me unless I repent at once. *Parce, Domine. Parce servo tuo.*

Point 3.—I may imagine a soul cut off after its one mortal sin. Perhaps it had acquired previous merits by corresponding with grace—it was beloved by God, was His adopted child, &c. And now? For one sin it is consigned to hopeless and eternal punishment!

What must be the terrible nature of a sin, which breaks asunder the bond uniting such a God and Father with His child whom He so much loved! It is the violation of all the rights of God, and of all His claims as a Father; it is a foul contempt of Him, a rejection of His infinite goodness. How vile a thing must not I then appear before God and His angels, with my poor soul weighed down with sin! How I should tremble in His sacred presence!

Colloquy.—I fling myself in spirit at the feet of Jesus hanging for me on the Cross, and tell Him humbly that I owe it all to Him that I am not lost. It is through the many wounds He has received for me. For me He became Man, a very slave, a Man of Sorrows. He bore my iniquities; for me He was condemned to such a cruel death. And yet what return have I made? Alas! to my shame and confusion; what have I not done against Him? Despised His love, frustrated His designs, treated Him as my enemy, squandered His blood.

Ah! what shall I do in future? Oh! may Jesus grant me the grace of repentance and a resolution to make amends for my ingratitude.

End with the "Our Father."

The motives proposed in this meditation are calculated to inspire shame, confusion, fear, and horror for sin, and thus a state of attrition; although in the colloquy St. Ignatius puts before us the reflection which is calculated to excite true contrition, namely, the infinite goodness of God crucified by our sins.

In the following meditation he proposes the consideration of the number, deformity, and malice of our own sins, and how we must appear in God's sight. This ought to fill us with intense sorrow and shame,

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which should force from us internal tears at least, if it does not betray itself externally, and also with great self-contempt, when we get a deeper knowledge of ourselves. By going deep down into ourselves we learn to know and despise ourselves, and this drives us nearer to God and stimulates us to become more closely united with Him, which is the true work of perfection. With St. Augustine, after this meditation, let us often pray : *Domine noverim me ! ut oderim me, noverim te ut diligam te !* —“O Lord, let me know myself, that I may hate myself; but let me know Thee, that so I may love Thee.”

ON OUR OWN SINS.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I will picture to myself my soul confined as in a prison-house of my body of corruption, and myself amidst the brute creation in this valley of tears; or filled with inordinate affections as so many foul reptiles.

Prelude 2.—I will beg a profound and intense sorrow for my many and great sins.

Point 1.—Pass in review, though not with the details of an examination of conscience as for confession, my many sins of omission and commission, in thought, word, or deed, of my past life: during my youth, up to manhood, and to the present time; the places in which I have lived, the employments or offices I have held, my relations with others, whether inferiors, equals, or superiors; when and where and what was my first sin; what passion predominated and dragged me into frequent sin; what a multitude of my own sins! but alas! also perchance I drew others into sin, and thus became responsible for their offences and crimes—of impurity, injustice, anger, disobedience to lawful authority, neglect

of religion, uncharity, &c. ; violations of the commandments of God and of His Holy Church, abuse or neglect of the sacraments, sins of scandal, and of co-operation in the sins of others.

Moreover, we ought not only to recall our mortal sins, but also some venial sins as well; for although they do not make us enemies of God, they are no less a disobedience towards Him whom we are bound to serve as our last end.

Alas! how truly may I say, "My iniquities are multiplied above the hairs on my head."¹ "Who will give a fountain of tears to my eyes?"²

Point 2.—Consider the deformity and malice there is in every mortal sin, even if we abstract from its being forbidden. In the first place, it is unreasonable, as in a man follows his appetites against his own judgment, thus lowering himself to the brute,³ as we see in anger, intemperance, lust, &c. ; nay, below the animal creation, which is content to satisfy its natural instinct. Again, the sinner, instead of ruling his evil inclinations, sells himself as a slave to them.⁴ What an infamy! Our conscience convicted us of this when in our first sins we shivered with fear, we hid our guilt, tried to stifle the reproaches of our guilty soul.

Point 3.—And who am I, who have thus offended God? If I compare myself with merely those of my own household or community, as to natural gifts and accomplishments; as to intellect, knowledge, disposition, or character; or as to supernatural gifts; how small I am in the comparison; and if I further consider them and compare them in all these respects with the rest of

¹ Psalm xxxix. 13.

² Jerem. ix. 1.

³ "And man when he was in honour did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." (Psalm xlviii. 13.)

⁴ "Amen, amen, I say to you, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (St. John viii. 34.)

mankind, as to knowledge, virtue, power, &c., I am as an atom.¹ What then must I be in comparison with the angelic world, and finally, with God? My worse than nothingness overwhelms me! body a hot-bed of corruption, senses overflowing with putrefaction of sin, and my soul a reservoir of putrid abscesses—my whole self an abyss of waywardness and malice.²

O Lord, my substance is as nothing before Thee.³ I am but rottenness and worms,⁴ and a son of perdition.

Point 4.—But who is God whom I have offended? Compare His infinite perfections⁵ with my defects; His virtues with the opposite vices in me; His wisdom with my ignorance; His power with my weakness; His sanctity and justice with my guiltiness; His goodness and love with my mean selfishness. Woe is me! Against whom have I sinned? I have dishonoured God—sinner as I am. (What have I done? Against whom?) and have wickedly and ungratefully spent my days in insulting Him—I, a speck of a speck, outraging His Infinite Majesty.

¹ "All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing and vanity." (Isaias xl. 17.)

² In the natural order, I may consider what I am as to the body and its senses, and intellectually, and morally; and then what I am in all these respects socially, and relatively to others. In the supernatural order, I may recall the graces I have received, both absolutely and comparatively; and from this reflection I shall be overwhelmed with even greater shame, confusion, and horror.

³ Psalm xxxviii. 6.

⁴ Job xxxv. 6.

⁵ St. Ignatius proposes only four of the Divine perfections, which God shares with us, and which we forfeit by sin. Thus His wisdom, by which He determines Himself as the *end* of all things, and all else as *means* by which according to their nature they might conduce to that end; His *power* in the creation and conservation of all creatures; His *goodness* in the generosity of His provision for the benefit of all in the natural order, and as regards man in the supernatural order also; His *sanctity* and justice; with infinite aversion towards evil and infinite attachment to good.

Point 5.—By my sins I have given all nature the right to revolt against me. The very brute creation is entitled to reproach me. Angels of Heaven, unless withheld, should have rushed forward to avenge their outraged Lord; sun should not shine on me; the very earth should open its mouth to swallow me, and avenge its Creator. When the unhappy Semei insulted David, the faithful Abigail cried out: “*Quis est iste canis mortuus . . . ibo et amputabo caput ejus.*” Certainly the indignation of Abigail was quite legitimate. How is it that no angel in Heaven has dealt so with me? Such was the feeling of Borgia, who, when he met some oxen, wondered how it was that they did not gore him to death, and how the workmen did not break his head with their mallets.

In colloquy I must thank God for His mercy for having spared me, and “confess to Him . . . for that He has rescued me from the lower Hell.” I must address the angels, that, seeing me, they still were withheld from cutting me off in my sins. I will thank God, who has so spared me, and actually has never ceased to heap coals of fire upon my head by constantly pouring down upon me fresh graces. I will repeat my act of pure and heartfelt contrition, and end with the “Our Father.”

REPETITION ON THREE SINS.

1. After making the two preceding meditations, it is well to select one or two of our chief sins, which we may recall often during the course of the exercises of the First Week, in order to root them, and the causes of them, out of our hearts, and that we may excite ourselves to supplant them by the opposite virtues.

2. Many advantages are to be found in these repetitions of meditation both as regards the intellect and

the will. For often in first considering a subject, the intellect may be taken up by its novelty and other circumstances regarding it, so as to overlook its importance and its practical bearing upon self, and thus it fails to affect the will. Again, we often experience either great aridity or spiritual consolation. It is well to revert to these thoughts, as in both cases, especially in the former, may be contained some great fruit which our own wayward nature, and the malice of the enemy of our human nature, wish to rob us of.

In these repetitions it is well not to spend much time on the exercise of the intellect, but rather to excite the affections and the will in forming practical resolutions, and in earnest prayers to God to obtain His grace whereby to keep them.

3. For this object St. Ignatius prescribes three colloquies: one to our Blessed Lady, praying her to intercede for us with her Ever-Blessed Son; a second to Jesus Christ in His capacity of Mediator and Advocate for us with the Eternal Father; and a third to our Eternal Father Himself, that He would vouchsafe to hear our poor prayers in union with those of Mary and Jesus, and to grant us the grace which we ask.

After the beginning and preparatory prayer as usual:

Prelude 1.—As in the preceding meditation.

Prelude 2.—We will beg intense shame and confusion, seeing how often we have abused God's mercy, and deserved eternal punishment; and secondly, intense sorrow and repentant tears, a contrite and humble heart, which God will not despise.

Point 1.—God created the angels to serve Him for a short time, and then to possess Him eternally. Many refused through pride, and were hurled into Hell; for a single sin of thought, and all of them without a single exception. And I, a man, after so many sins, and so

often pardoned—sins of thought, word, and deed, and frequently of so degrading a nature, have been spared! What room here for shame and confusion and acts of sorrow.

Point 2.—Next, God creates Adam and Eve, and places them in honour, with so many gifts above the requirements of their nature, both supernatural and preternatural, designing after their short time of trial to assume them into Heaven. They violate the easy command He laid upon them, and they and their posterity are punished, alas! how fearfully, and this punishment is as universal and as terrible now as ever, and will continue so until the last man shall be born. Let us reflect on ourselves. Born in sin, our life is an exile in a valley of tears, in which sin is added to sin, and this in the sight of our Saviour crucified for us, and we refuse to do penance, and hold up our sinful heads. What should be our fear, shame, and confusion as we gaze at ourselves, and contemplate our infamy.

Point 3.—We see the havoc of one single mortal sin unrepented of in the torments of Hell. How terrible to fall under the justice of the living God. And perhaps we have exposed ourselves to this for months, may be for years, as it were trying to weary His mercy and His love.

End with this triple colloquy,¹ in which we beg of our Blessed Lady that she would obtain for us a real internal knowledge and detestation of our sins; also a deep feeling of the irregularity and depravity of our life, that we may amend and order it rightly; and lastly, a knowledge of the world, so that we may, out

¹ In this triple colloquy we beg for three things: (a) knowledge and detestation of sin, (b) a clear insight into the irregularity of the past life, (c) and lastly, a knowledge of the world. Why is this? Because it is the influence of the example and maxims of the world which is our greatest danger, and the chief cause of our sins; and secondly, our want of reflection on the malice of sin makes us rush into it.

of abhorrence for it, reject all vain and worldly pleasures and pursuits. We then make the same request of our Blessed Lord, and say the *Anima Christi*. Lastly, humbly implore the same of the Eternal Father through the merits of our Lady, and through the merits of the Passion and Death of our Lord, and end with the "Our Father."

REPETITION OF ONE'S OWN SINS.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As in the last meditation.

Prelude 2.—We beg earnestly intense sorrow for our many sins, and tears of perfect compunction for having so fearfully offended our good God.

Point 1.—We pass in review the long line of our sins, in the places in which we have lived, with the companions with whom we have associated, in the offices and occupations we have held in our youth and manhood, &c. Sins of thought, word, action, and omission, sins of scandal, &c.¹

With profound sincerity we will say the *Confiteor*.

Point 2.—Even if my sins did not involve a violation of any commandment of God, yet they are hideous and malicious, inasmuch as they are against reason, and degrade us to the animal creation, whose law is the appetites; they render us slaves to our passions, and would discredit us before our fellow-men, if they knew our guilt.

Point 3.—By comparing ourselves with all mankind and these with one single angel, and this with all the

¹ Sins in regard of spiritual duties, either performing them badly or omitting them, sins against the vows, or negligence in their observance, violation of rules of modesty, sins in the discharge of our office, in conversation, in over-great care of the body, and too little of the soul. And if we are priests or Religious, these sins are the more grievous, as we are supposed to be "*orationi intenti, mundo et vitis mortui.*"

spirits in Heaven, we see ourselves as the mere shadow of a speck when compared with God. If we consider further the defects and miseries and the negative side, so to speak, in ourselves, truly we shall be overwhelmed with our worse than nothingness and unfitness to mingle in respectable society.

Point 4.—On the other hand, who is God? His wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and beauty! If the moral estimate of crime is to be measured by the dignity of the person offended, and by the vileness of the offender, and also by the obligations of the latter to the former, my good God, what a monster of vice and ingratitude I must be in Thy sight! Thou the infinite and absolute Lord, and I poor, and finite, and dependent upon Thee in all things.

Point 5.—Well may we cry out with wonder, Why sky and air, earth and sea, men and angels, have not been stricken with a fever to do vengeance upon us, and have not conspired to torture and destroy us.

Again we will end by a triple colloquy to our Lady, our Lord, and to our Heavenly Father, for grace to recognize and abhor each and all our past sins, to feel intimately the sad disorder of our past life, and to know this wretched world, that we may shake it off and despise it, together with its false principles, pernicious seductions, and bad examples. End with "Our Father."

THE HORRIBLE EFFECTS OF MORTAL SIN.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Picture the soul as a most beautiful child covered over and eaten up by most loathsome and gangrenous ulcers.

Prelude 2.—Beg a great shame and confusion at

seeing your deformity and misery, and the pitiful state to which sin has reduced your soul.

Point 1.—Let us see how sin deforms the soul, worse far than would be a body covered with foul and sickening cancers, and hideously deformed, so that could we behold it even in a mirror, we should be overpowered with horror, not only by the vileness which is proper and essential to the act of sin, by taking from it all its symmetry, but also because when it enters the soul it expels sanctifying grace and supernatural beauty, and makes it loathsome in the sight of God and His angels.¹ If the effect of a sin were to be to change our complexion from white to black, who would commit it, and if guilty, would not at once hasten to repent and seek forgiveness? And yet the defacement of the soul is far worse; yet men are not ashamed to live with this disfigurement, though the saints, and angels, and God Himself see it, and are filled with loathing and disgust at the sight.

Point 2.—The grace of God invests the soul with exalted and supernatural dignity, and renders it in His eyes more sublime, more noble and precious than all earthly monarchs or angels, if considered only according to their *natural* excellence. He is full of love and admiration of it. But no sooner is this grace forfeited than His love gives place to hatred, and if by repentance it is not won back again, He will show no more compassion for it than I should have for a viper which had tried to sting me to death. For by how much it was ennobled and beautiful, by so much has sin rendered it vile and loathsome. To outward observance it may appear honourable, noble, and blessed; but in reality it is only a glistening sepulchre, full of worms and corruption.²

Point 3.—By the friendship of God we, in a manner,

¹ Jerem. iv. 1, 8.

² St. Matt. xxiii. 27.

become sharers of His attributes and riches, *in re et in spe*. If the friendship of man is a source of real happiness, who can tell the intense bliss of the friendship of God? And if the keenest of heart-wounds is the loss of a friend, what human intellect can conceive the fearful wound inflicted by sin on the soul, by its robbing it of the friendship of God, and what is worse, changing it into hatred? Again, the deepest and bitterest enmity is that which exists between those whose love ought to be the greatest, as between parent and child, brothers and sisters, husband and wife; what then must be the enmity between God and man which is produced by sin. And what the torture to feel that we have made God our enemy, and have disgraced ourselves before Him! Surely it should work madness in the brain. What darker, more horrid, or more fearful thought can occupy the mind of a man? To live in the consciousness that one is the object of loathing to His own Father who is in Heaven!

Point 4.—As long as I am in the state of grace, I have a right to the Kingdom of Heaven. I have it on the title of justice, and God is bound to give it me, nor can the whole world, or the devil, rob me of it; for I am co-heir with Jesus Christ; but the moment I sin, my title-deeds are forfeited.¹ I lose not merchandize, not an estate, not a principality, but a Heavenly Kingdom, eternal glory. If a man loses great earthly goods, what a sadness and oppression takes hold of him, what grief and despair! No act nor skill can give him relief. And yet what is the loss of all earthly things, the possession of which must be very uncertain and short-lived, compared with the eternal loss of Heaven? But the most terrible effect of all is, that the sinner too often is too blind to realize it, or tries to drown the sense of it by plunging into fresh excesses in his desperation, or by

¹ 2 Cor. vi.

giving himself up to a life of dissipation, and ensures to himself consequent misery and despair.

Point 5.—Finally, the sinner exposes himself at every moment to the risk of falling into Hell, over whose abysses he hangs suspended by the brittle thread of life. Well we may say with Deuteronomy,¹ “They are a nation without counsel and without prudence. Oh, that they would be wise and understand, and would provide for their last end.” What a folly it is, for a momentary satisfaction, which too often causes a feeling of shame and a sense of self-degradation, to run so fearful a risk. May God forgive us!

Colloquy of fear, of shame and sorrow, and of gratitude to so good a God for His long-suffering and patience until now.

End with “Our Father.”

As we have made an application of the Foundation to the Christian: to man, raised through the merciful love of God to the supernatural order by the merits of the Life, Passion, and Death of Jesus Christ; and as we have seen that he has thus been established in a higher and closer relationship with the Deity, whereby he is made the son of the Father by adoption, the brother of His only Son by grace, and the living temple of the Holy Spirit, it followed that in this his elevated state he incurred a heavier obligation, which was to love the Lord his God with the whole of his mind and heart, soul and strength, and that his praise, reverence, and service must be rooted in and animated by this spirit. For this reason was it that when Jesus was asked by a doctor of the law tempting Him,² “Master, which is the great commandment of the Law?” He said to him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy

¹ Deut. xxxii. 28.

² St. Matt. xxii.

whole mind: this is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets." It is not enough for us to praise, reverence, and serve God *in any way*, but it is required that this praise, reverence, and service be founded in love, and be such as a child pays to a father, or to a well-beloved brother, or to a guest. Hence in such a one sin has a peculiar and special criminality.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SIN.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I place myself humbly in the presence of the Three Divine Persons of the ever-adorable Trinity, before whom the angels are in adoration.

Prelude 2.—I beg that I may know the height, depth, and breadth of the malice, baseness, and ingratitude of my sins.

Point 1.—After reflecting on the infinite majesty, power, riches, and beauty of the Eternal Father, I consider and dwell on the awful truth of His having adopted me by a real adoption to be His child, to be His heir and co-heir with Jesus Christ. "Raising me up from the earth, and lifting me from the dunghill to place me with the very princes of His people."¹

Oh, what love! what sacrifices this love entailed! and all this for one so mean, so unlovable, and who He knew would prove so heedless and ungrateful. Such love He never showed or felt even for His angels. Nay, as a fond Father He has assigned one of them to be my constant guardian and attendant. And all He wants from me is to treat Him as my Father!² He could not ask less. What child can help praising,

¹ Psalm cxii. 7.

² Malach. i. 6.

reverencing, and serving his parent? Love forces him to it, and not to do it would be pain. Yet what is an earthly parent compared with our real Father who is in Heaven? An unnatural child inspires us with horror. What the horror then that I inspire, when by a sin I prove so fearfully unnatural to my Heavenly Father. I hear Him addressing His angels, "I have brought up My child and have exalted him, and see how he hath despised Me."¹ And again, "Be astonished ye gates of Heaven, and be ye very desolate."² Alas! what pain and shame I have caused, not only by mortal sin, but by a deliberate venial sin, to the loving Father's heart. Bad enough for an enemy or a stranger to offend and outrage Him, but for His favoured child to treat Him so! Is it not in a certain sense true, that a venial sin in His child strikes a more painful blow at Him than a mortal sin in one less favoured? And to be thus guilty for such a trifling and fleeting pleasure or satisfaction! Surely for a child of God to sin is terrible. It furnishes the devils in Hell with an infernal gratification, it causes the angels in Heaven to put on mourning.

Point 2.—If I consider the Son of God, He too is infinite as His Father—is equally the object of the love and adoration of the blessed spirits who pay Him homage and reverence as their King and Lord. But I am of His own family, having the same Father and Mother. I am not an acquaintance, not a friend, but He calls me and I am His brother. He has taken Flesh for me, starved and worked for me—He suffered and bled and died for me—and nothing can satisfy His love but I must feed upon His Flesh and Blood, which angels must not touch but must adore. He has prepared a place for me, that we may be happy for all eternity. Oh! could I realize this fully, I should die of joy! I

¹ Isaias i. 2.

² Jerem. ii. 12.

could not live. And all this love, and all this wasting of Himself for my benefit,¹ is for me, a poor, mean unworthy beggar. What then am I to think of myself if ever I commit one mortal sin? I crucify Him again, and make a mockery of Him. I recklessly spill His Most Precious Blood, I turn from a Brother's love and make common cause with the devils against Him, and furnish them with the occasion of blaspheming and taunting Him. If an enemy had done this, He could have borne it,² but to be treated thus by a favoured brother! Alas! who, if he had a spark of faith or of right feeling, would or could ever be guilty of such black ingratitude as to commit, I do not say a mortal sin, but even a deliberate venial sin? Who can bear the thought of such treatment of one who deserves our love and the love of all mankind? Our blood would be stirred to see an enemy thus treated. A dog will die for the hand which feeds it, but I care nothing for Him, who has done all that a God can do for me, if He steps in between me and my indulgences, and that indulgence degrading and unworthy. Truly sin in the Christian is a fearful crime against the Elder Brother, the first-born of many brethren.³

Point 3.—But the malice of the Christian's sin does not end here. There is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit of Love, the Comforter, the Teacher of all truth—He who in His Divine Person consents to dwell in these very bodies of ours, and is always helping to beautify our souls to make them a more worthy dwelling-place for the Deity, and imparting to us an increase of His seven-fold gifts. In His love for us, He is happy to reside within the poor and unworthy dwelling of our narrow and wayward hearts. But how do I treat this Divine Guest when I consent to mortal sin? I banish Him from my soul, and with Him

¹ Augustine.

² Psalm liv. 13.

³ Romans viii. 29.

His holy gifts and graces. I deface His temple,¹ and on its ruins I place the enemy of God and of my soul, the devil;² all my beauty disappears, and what was once as a fair city full of spirits adoring their Lord, is become a deserted solitude; and with desolation is my soul made desolate through my thoughtlessness. How can I look up towards Heaven which I have so insulted and despised! How can I address my God whom I have so outraged. Who will give fountains of tears to my eyes, that I may by them wash away my iniquities!

Make a fervent triple colloquy, as in the preceding meditations, and end with the "Our Father."

ON VENIAL SIN.

There are two kinds of venial sin. One kind comprises such as are committed out of negligence, or weakness, or with only partial advertence and without full deliberation. From these even the most perfect are not exempted for any length of time. The other consists of faults committed with full deliberation and consent, and of set purpose. These, by the help of Divine grace, all can avoid, and many saints have in fact avoided them for many years of their lives. It is to these latter that we now refer.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Imagine the soul weak, unnerved, and sinking from disease.

Prelude 2.—I will beg an intimate knowledge of the meanness of venial sin, a sincere sorrow for my many sins, and grace to make a firm resolution to avoid them for the time to come.

¹ Psalm lxxviii. 1.

² 1 St. John iii. 10.

Point 1.—The punishment of venial sin proves its malice. For God visits it with Purgatory; in which, according to some of the Fathers¹ and theologians,² the fires are of the same nature with those of Hell except for their duration, and the soul suffers the anguish of separation from God. It is torn violently by two conflicting loves which torture it far more than would be a man whose body was being rent in twain by opposite forces; inasmuch as the soul's pain is greater than mere pain of body. The soul knows its God, His beauty, goodness, and love, and consequently has an intense desire to be with Him and to possess Him; and on the other hand it sees its own meanness, ingratitude, and unjust conduct in regard of Him; and this fills it with an intense desire to punish itself and thus vindicate His honour and glory by due expiation. This is that which constitutes the worst pain of Purgatory, and really makes it far more terrible than all the pain which could be endured if conceived in this life. And we must remember that this is inflicted by a loving God upon those who are His beloved children and are destined to live with Him for all eternity.

What then must be the malice of a venial sin, and how great must be the heinousness of it, when infinite love and justice is bound so to punish it in His own most beloved spouses. What is our folly to consent to venial faults, knowing that if unrepented of we may be consigned for hours, or months, or years, alive, to a consuming fire, and to an agonizing worm of conscience, which will give us no rest.

Again, God often punishes venial sins in this life by bodily pains and infirmities, and sometimes by spiritual afflictions such as temptations, disquiets and troubles

¹ Augustine, Gregory the Great, &c.

² Suarez, Bellarmine, &c.

of conscience, desolation, darkness, aridity, withdrawal of His sensible presence; and worst of all by withdrawal of His superabundant gifts and graces, thus exposing us to greater difficulty in His service, and to danger of failure in it, verifying that of the Wise Man: "He who despiseth small things, will fall by little and little."¹

Point 2.—How great is the intrinsic malice of venial sin!

1. It is a stain, disorder, and monstrous defilement of the soul, as it is against right reason, and the teachings of holy Faith.

2. It is an offence, an injury, and a slight, offered to God, as it is against His holy will and a violation of His commands. What would the world say of a son who confined his love and service of his father so as never to do what might expose him to be disinherited, but cared little how else he might sadden or displease him? Such is the venial sinner towards his loving and Heavenly Father.

3. Venial sin is an offence of a *man* against a *God*. And consequently, mortal sin excepted, it is the greatest evil which can befall us in this world; and therefore is a greater calamity than to suffer the pains of Hell or the loss of Heaven itself. Oh! with what horror should we not fly then from venial sin, and how bitterly should we repent our many sins!

Point 3.—Venial sin disposes the soul to mortal sin. Just as bodily infirmities cause faintness and debility, so venial sin causes want of strength in the practice of virtue and resistance to temptation, weariness and languor in spiritual duties, and sloth in our spiritual progress, and an inclination to seek bodily comforts. It exposes us to spiritual death. It hardens the conscience, habituates us to faults, and by degrees to venial sins of habit,

¹ Ecclus. xix. 1.

diminishes our fear of them, causes us to neglect the occasions of them—to lay aside our virtuous habits which are opposed to them—gradually causes God to diminish His graces, and thus renders us ripe for a fall when a more than ordinary temptation assails us. Wherefore, as Chrysostom says, we ought to dread venial sin more than mortal; as it is more dangerous and more treacherous.

Let us in our colloquy implore forgiveness of our many sins, offences, and negligences, beg a salutary and holy horror of them, and the grace to avoid all the occasions which may expose us to the danger of committing them, and end with the "Our Father."

REPETITION OF VENIAL SIN.

This may be done with great fruit, especially by those who by the mercy of God are preserved from mortal sin, and are living in His habitual service, but yet from time to time fall into deliberate venial sin, by taking the same points as St. Ignatius lays down in the meditation on "Our own Sins."

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—We may picture to ourselves our soul like one in a decline, weak and incapable of making a step forward for our own salvation.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg light, courage, and confidence to overcome ourselves, and intense sorrow for our many venial sins.

Point 1.—Pass in review your life since your conversion, the places and the occupations in which it has been spent. What a mass of faults in *thoughts* of vainglory, uncharitableness, self-conceit; in *words* of falsehood, exaggeration, detraction, worldliness, &c.;

of *deeds* as regards yourself, or others, or God; of *omission* of your spiritual duties, of the duties of your state of life, of the scandal and bad example you have given to others, &c. And with shame make your confession of them to God and His angels.

Point 2.—Let us next see the malice of them, even if they were not forbidden at all; for example, the meanness of falsehood, which if detected would make us blush; also the cowardice and meanness of backbiting and detraction, the contemptibleness of vanity and vainglory, the hypocrisy of striving to appear wiser and better than we are, the sacrificing of others to our own selfishness, the coolness and indifference to all spiritual things and the duties of religion. Oh, how gross and mean do all these appear, especially when we see them in a child of God. In a worldling one can see them without a shudder, but how black and repugnant they are in one who is in the state of grace, and consequently from whom we expect with reason so much more perfection.

Point 3.—And in God our Father it is so different. He is the very counterpart of all these. He is the truth, He is charity and love, He is forgetfulness of self and all sacrifice through love for us: *Misericors et miserator et justus*,¹ the thrice Holy One.

Point 4.—Admitting that the ethical malice of sin is chiefly to be estimated by the distance between the offender and the person offended, and secondly by the claims of him who suffers the offence on him by whom it is given, we ask, Who can conceive the malice of a venial sin? For we are separated from God by an infinite gulf, and His claims upon us are likewise infinite—creation, conservation, justification, adoption into His own family, and sharing with us His own inheritance. What then must be our horror of venial

¹ Psalm cxiv. 5.

sin? And this ought to be the greater, because it is so treacherous, and presents itself to us under such a disguised appearance.

Point 5.—We may well wonder how God has borne with us, how His angels have had patience with us, how the whole of creation has tolerated us, seeing that we have thus basely and ignominiously treated their Creator. What a humiliating thought it is that the animals which we feed and which are so submissive to us have never failed to do God's will, whereas we are so guilty.

In our colloquy let us pour out our souls in shame and sorrow for our many venial sins, faults, and negligences, and let us beg of God to confirm us in our resolution to lose all, even our life itself, rather than commit another deliberate venial sin.

End with the "Our Father."

ON TEPIDITY.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves before God and His angels, overwhelmed with confusion at our many sins, whilst He addresses us in the words of Apocalypse,¹ "Because thou art tepid I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth."

Prelude 2.—Let us beg light and grace to apprehend fully the miseries of a tepid life, and strength to conceive new fervour and to resolve effectually to reform our lives.

Point 1.—*The characteristics of a tepid soul.*—(1) It drags languidly the yoke of the Lord, and does all its actions in a dull routine. (2) It seeks to avoid all that involves sacrifice, effort, or labour, and studies its own

¹ Apoc. iii. 16.

self-ease and comfort, and looks only for human and earthly consolations, and indiscreetly indulges effusion of heart. (3) It induces us to shorten spiritual duties, or omit them altogether, and to waste time in light or useless reading. (4) It leads us to think only of self and to ignore others; at one time to indulge in excess of joy, at another in total discouragement. (5) Finally, the tepid man acts from natural motives, speaks without discretion, reads and meditates without fruit, confesses without resolution, communicates without faith and fervour, contents himself with moderate virtue, and fosters endless habits of venial sin.

The result of all this is that he appreciates little heavenly things, and has but little comfort in them, and dare not give himself to the full enjoyment of earthly ones; and is constantly disturbed by his rebellious passions. He cuts himself off from the consolation, peace, and joy which are the reward of a fervent soul. He is like the wine in Proverbs xxiv., or the barren fig-tree.¹

Point 2.—Dangers of Tepidity.—(1) The tepid man dwells on the little good, but turns away from the many evils which he does. (2) He is like a man in a slow fever which is very hard to cure. In fact, many big sinners are converted for one who is tepid. For he gradually loses his horror of mortal sin, and thus begins to tamper with temptation, and ceases to be alarmed at the free indulgence of his senses and affections, and is thereby disposed to mortal sin. Thus he places himself in the downward course of reprobation, and causes disgust to God, as well as sadness to the Sacred Heart.

Point 3.—The causes of Tepidity are chiefly (1) omission of or negligence in spiritual duties, (2) contempt of little things, also (3) the neglect of watching over the beginnings of faults, and over natural affections.

¹ St. Matt. xxi.

In the colloquy let us beg pardon for our past abuse of grace and remissness in God's service, and end with "Our Father."

ON HELL.

1. After the meditations on Sin, St. Ignatius in his Book of the Exercises places the exercise on Hell. It may be asked why he does not treat the "last things" in their natural order?

First he assigns the four meditations on Sin and this on Hell for the First Week, as being sufficient, if well made, to secure the end proposed, namely, shame and sorrow for the sins committed, and a firm resolution to sin no more; as also the rejection of all inordinate affections. It is true that he does not forbid the meditations on Death, on the Particular and General Judgment: but these must be given *after* those on Sin and on Hell.¹

Again, the *Directorium* also adds that other meditations on Hell besides the one in the Exercises may be given.

2. Secondly, St. Ignatius desires us to conceive a great horror and sorrow for sin, as we have said, and for this end, no meditation is so well fitted as this of fear of punishment, where motives of love of and gratitude towards God have failed to change the heart.

3. Moreover, when we consider that the sinner by his sin actually *ipso facto* incurs the punishment of Hell, and like a malefactor is already sentenced to the same, it is more natural in reality that this exercise should follow those on sin, immediately.

The soul already being filled with horror, shame, and confusion at the sight of its sins, finds itself on the verge of eternal misery, and is filled with terror lest it

¹ *Direct.* xv. 4.

fall into the hands of the living God, and consequently is driven to abandon its sins altogether, and at once. The other meditations adapted to the First Week may be made with advantage afterwards, to confirm and strengthen this disposition of the exercitant; but might if put before this exercise distract him and interfere with the end in view.

In order that this exercise may more deeply impress the mind, St. Ignatius proposes that we should weigh and ponder the nature of the pains of Hell by the means of an application of the senses, in which we in spirit and imagination behold the persons, hear their cries, &c., applying each sense in turn. In doing this two things must be observed: the first is, that we must not fatigue the brain by trying to form too vivid a picture, and by too detailed imaginings; and secondly, with the application of each sense, we must reflect upon ourselves, and apply the matter to ourselves that we may draw profit from it.

It is a useful form of meditation or contemplation, for teaching us how to employ rightly our senses, and to correct all undue use of them. St. Ignatius places the application of the senses as the last exercise of the day, as being more easy for the exercitant, who will be fatigued after the different duties which have filled up the day.

I would also observe that we cannot live enough in the fear of Hell. No doubt, by God's mercy, we run less danger than most people; still, as God ordains by an express command that we must hope for Heaven, He equally ordains that we must fear Hell; for He says, "I say to you, *My friends*, fear Him who can cast both body and soul into Hell." Besides, there is no one, no matter how holy, who does not find himself sometimes in a critical position, in which the fear of Hell becomes wholesome: and in the Litanies of

the Saints we pray to be delivered from the misery of this "everlasting death," as also in the Sacrifice of the Mass, *Ab æterna damnatione nos eripi*, just before the Consecration.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Imagine the length, breadth, and depth of Hell, a vast dark cavern in the very centre of the earth.¹

Prelude 2.—Let us beg an intense feeling of the punishment of the damned, so that if ever through our own fault we forget the love of our Eternal Lord, at least fear may save us from falling into sin.

Point 1.—Let us see that long, narrow, dark dungeon filled with fire, in which the damned are immersed, but have no light—dense smoke increases the pitchy darkness, and the darkness increases the horror of the fire. The miserable victims bound hands, feet, and neck—of deformed, woeful, and desperate aspect. Oh! how they burn! The devils, triumphing in having made them their prey, now revel in torturing them. And they now are become devils themselves, incapable of anything but hating, and only deserving hatred. Let us see their sadness, gloom, terror, gnawing remorse, and black despair. They are vast in number, and of all sorts and conditions—priests, Religious, laymen, of all ages, of both sexes—all confounded together under one common name—damned. And this is the end of the freedom of the sinner; this is the result of refusing when on earth to praise, love, and serve God! Who

¹ Owing to many passages of Scripture, as Psalms lxii. liv. cxiii., also Eccles. xvii. 19, &c., many of the Fathers, as Justin (*Ep. to Trolenses*), Theophylactus (*Ad Antolyicum*, ii.), Clement (*Stromata*), Tertullian (*De Anima*, 54), Athanasius (in Psalm lxii.), Hilary (in Isaias), Ephrem, Cyril of Jerusalem and of Alexandria, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, &c., and also Rubeir and Soto, hold that it is underneath the earth. So, too, the Essenes, Pharisees, and the Talmud.

can bear the sight of Hell, of these damned souls and of devils, for all eternity? Let us learn to keep a strict guard over our eyes now, for it is by the undue license of our eyes that death first enters into our souls.

Point 2.—Let us imagine that we *hear* the groans, screams, howls, and blasphemies, against Christ our Lord and His saints, as the harsh and horrid noise re-echoes through the deep caverns. Let us listen to the reproaches and mutual curses of accomplices in crime, of bad husbands and wives, of parents and children—to the mockery and jeers of the devils. How terrible this never-ceasing clamour and fearful uproar. How awful the hoarse blasphemies against God, our Blessed Lord, and our Blessed Lady. It was this point which made the deepest impression on St. Ignatius. How much sweeter is the sorrowful plaint of a true penitent, which will drown the horrid cries of Hell.

Blessed be God who has given us time to praise His loving mercy and to escape His terrible justice. Let us fly from the conversation of worldlings and hedge our ears with thorns,¹ that we may not join in their wearied concert in Hell. Let us by all means guard our tongues and thus escape a world of iniquity here and everlasting howlings hereafter.

Point 3.—But how terrible the *stench* which must arise from the smoke, the sulphur, and corruption of that infected dungeon, which no breath of wind may disperse, and which is ever getting thicker and thicker, and accumulating from the foul corruption of the bodies of the condemned. This sickens and suffocates without destroying. How terrible to those who in this life covered themselves with unguents and decked themselves with roses,² and who could not breathe the same atmosphere as the poor. Now the more delicate they were in life, the greater are their torments.³ Let us

¹ Ecclus. xxviii. 28. ² Wisdom xi. 7, 8. ³ Apoc. xviii. 7.

beware of indulging this sense, which causes a waste of money, gratifies sensuality, and scandalizes or disedifies our neighbour.

Point 4.—We may imagine we *taste* the bitter tears and cup of woe of the damned; their rage and envy, &c., and the venom of the worm of conscience, and of their unprofitable regrets and disappointments. We may picture their fearful thirst and their gnawing hunger. And all this for ever. What do they think now of the indulgences of time in eating and drinking? How bitter their reflection: “I have tasted a little honey, and lo! I am condemned to this eternal death.”¹ Let us follow the counsel of à Kempis,² “Restrain the taste and thou wilt more easily overcome every inclination of the flesh.” How well the saints understood and practised this. How sadly are we wanting in this, seeking exemptions from fasting and abstinence, deluding ourselves with the idea of preserving our health, &c. Over-eating has killed more men than have ever fallen in battle, and tends to dull all the faculties of the soul.

If we are not suffering these torments, it is through the mercy of God.

Point 5.—Let us ponder on the sensible pains, on their intensity, constancy, eternity—in a fire kept alive by the breath of an angry God—containing in itself opposite qualities of light and darkness, heat and cold, affecting and permeating the soul itself, though how we do not know. Let us ask ourselves if we can bear everlasting burning, or dwell in everlasting flames. What a madness it is, for all the pleasures of the world, though they lasted for a thousand years, to expose ourselves to these terrible flames, and to shed tears of fruitless repentance for all eternity.

In the colloquy let us address our Lord Jesus Christ, renewing our sorrow for our sins, our love for His

¹ 1 Kings xiv. 43.

² I. cxix.

mercy and goodness, in having so long and so often spared us, and beg the grace that nothing may ever separate us again from His love. "Here burn, here cut, here spare me not, but spare me in eternity."

End with "Our Father."

ON THE SOUL IN HELL.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine we see a soul in that dungeon.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg to realize the internal miseries of the reprobate.

Point 1.—The worm of conscience rouses its victim by the perpetual memory that he is *lost*. He has lost God his Creator, his Saviour, his beginning, his last end. How few the words, but, O God, what a vast depth of meaning they contain. Eternity will not be long enough to understand it. He has lost all *good*; all *honour*, all *pleasure*, all *liberty*, all *consolation*, all *hope*—lost all; but in their place he has gained all that is evil to body and to soul. He has lost Father and Mother, company of the blessed, a sceptre, a throne, and a kingdom—and none ever to pity or feel for him! Friendship, sympathy, love, and hope have left him stranded.

Point 2.—Another thought that will never cease to torture the soul is—he is lost for *so little*, and when he might so *easily have been saved*. For so little gratification of sensuality, avarice, pride, envy, &c., and for so short a time, take it at its longest. Viewed from Hell, time itself seems but a flash of lightning, and earth itself is but a grain of sand, with all that it contains. How small and short, then, must appear all those things for which he has sacrificed the possession of God and incurred Hell. And how terrible that constant

reproach—lost through his own fault, for he might have been saved so easily. He will see all that God has done for his salvation, all that Jesus Christ suffered for his redemption, all that the Holy Ghost has wrought for his sanctification, all the graces, the sacraments, sermons, Masses, &c., all the counsels and admonitions of God's ministers, all the good examples of others—all these like horrid ghosts haunt him, and he cannot dispel them. It would appear more easy to be saved than lost. Each of them serves only to torment him more. He could be now in Heaven, whereas he is in Hell!

Point 3.—But if at last his punishment were to end even after a million of ages! But no; he is lost for ever—it is all over. There is a God, but I shall never see Him; angels and saints in their glory, but I shall never join them. Never a word of comfort or pity for me, but always these tears, this anguish, this torture, this despair. After millions of ages the justice of God will not be satisfied, &c., and I shall be no nearer the end of my torments than when they began.

In our colloquy let us make an act of sorrow for having so often deserved Hell; of gratitude for God's mercy that we are not condemned; and lastly, of confidence in His infinite goodness which has not spared us to condemn us in the end; and let us beg His holy grace to persevere in His holy service henceforth and until the end. "Our Father."

Here we might make a meditation on Purgatory, and consider the nature of the pains in Purgatory; on the helplessness in their own regard of the souls detained there, and on the causes by which they are detained.

St. Ignatius, as we have said, only lays down for the first part of the Exercises, the two meditations on Sin, together with a repetition of each, and an applica-

tion of the senses on Hell, each of which is calculated to produce the effect he had in view, which is to purge the soul of those vicious affections which withdraw it from the fulfilment of its last end. And in truth, any one of profound thought and of a generous heart, aided by God's grace and special and efficacious light, could in one single day find himself changed into another man; but this special grace God is not wont to give, nor is man ordinarily endowed with such perspicacity or prompt generosity of soul, but that his mind is somewhat blunted by passion and his will by perverse inclinations. Hence we find that, according to the dispositions and measure of grace, and according as they are tried by various spirits, and are earnest in their efforts, some sooner, others later, attain what they desire, which is true contrition and firm resolution for the future. Accordingly, the meditations for this purpose must be continued according to the needs of the exercitant.¹

For him, however, who is entangled with inordinate affections, both reason and experience prove the necessity of extending the exercises of the first part; and it is the duty of the director to determine the subjects and number of the meditations which are adapted to induce the exercitant to correct the disorder and corruption of his past life, such as death, the punishment of sin, judgment, &c.

The *Directorium*² observes that some of these at least should be given as an efficacious means of detaching the heart from inordinate love of earthly things, and of inspiring it with a holy fear of God. It is well also that repetitions of these meditations should be made, and that different points should be given in them, to remove all weariness and to impress the truth the deeper.³

¹ *Direct.* xvii. 1.

² *Ibid.* xv. 4.

³ *Ibid.* xiv. 1.

But whatever be the subjects, they must all have for their object to lead to the three-fold end for which we pray in the triple colloquy, namely, an intimate knowledge of our sins and deep abhorrence of them; a clear appreciation of the disorder of our life, that, detesting it, we may amend it and regulate it according to God; and lastly, a true knowledge of the world, that we may fly from its vanity and hollowness.

In accordance with these instructions of the note in the Spiritual Exercises after the fifth exercise, and of the *Directorium* in the chapters xiv. and xv., we will next meditate on Death.

ON DEATH.

1. This subject is intimately connected with the preceding meditations on Sin and Hell. For although we may be sincerely repentant for our past sins and irregularities, yet, as long as we are in this world, we are surrounded by objects which tend to flatter and seduce us.¹ The danger is very imminent and very grave, if we judge things by their appearance and not by what they really are. Now, to form a correct judgment and obviate this danger, our best counsellor is death. *Bonum est consilium tuum, O mors!*²

2. In this meditation we must adapt it and apply it to ourselves, and not simply consider death in the abstract.³ We are not merely to entertain a speculative memory of the latter things, but apply them to our own selves and our own souls. *Memorare novissima tua et in aeternum non peccabis.*⁴

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

¹ Wisdom iv. 12.

² Eccles. xli. 3; Baruch vi. 50.

³ Eccles. vii. 3.

⁴ Eccles. vii. 40.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves condemned to death, and the decree before us, "Thou shalt die and no longer live."¹

Prelude 2.—Let us beg grace to form and feel truly that judgment of the world and all that is in it, which we shall feel when the sentence will actually be carried out in our own case.

Point 1.—Death is *certain*. Men have called every other truth in question, but not this. There is no need of faith to convince us, for reason and daily experience prove it. It is a decree irrevocable and universal. Such was not God's intention.² It was sin which introduced it into the world.³ Each child of man is doomed, and neither wealth nor skill nor wisdom can avail to prevent it. Nature quivers and trembles at the thought, but to try to drown it is madness, and to ignore it is to resemble the ox.⁴

Let us make an act of submission to the sentence passed upon us;⁵ let us humble ourselves.⁶ We have sinned, we are great sinners, and consequently we must partake of the fruits of sin, which is death.

Point 2.—Death is the *end* of all *material* things. We must leave riches, honours, pleasures, our very bodies, dress, ornaments, and all our surroundings. We are like men asleep and dreaming life away; but death is a great awakener, and when he arouses us we

¹ Isaias xxxviii. 1.

² "For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him." (Wisdom ii. 23.)

³ "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Romans v. 12.)

⁴ "Immediately he followeth her as an ox led to be a victim, not knowing that he is drawn like a fool to bonds." (Prov. vii. 22.)

⁵ "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right." (Psalm cxviii. 137.)

⁶ "I shall live now no longer: spare me, for my days are nothing." (Job vii. 16.)

see and judge all things aright.¹ We cannot take anything with us, but others will dislodge us and put us in a few feet of earth. Granted that our life was one of glory and triumph, still we shall die just like the poorest and the most obscure.²

Men will speak about us as long as the funeral-bell tolls, and our glory will disperse with the smoke of the extinguished torches,³ and then there will be the silence of the grave about us. As to our body, it will decay ;⁴ it will become a squalid corpse, hollow-eyed, black-lipped, frothy-mouthed ; then it will fall to pieces and generate and feed worms ;⁵ and finally it will be a mere handful of dust.⁶

What folly, then, to attach any importance to anything on earth, which is nothing but an *ignis fatuus*, a vision of the night.⁷ To attach undue importance to things of earth, and not to use them solely as means to our end, is against reason and faith, it is a consummate folly. This thought is enough to drive all vanity out of our head, all vice from the heart : it ought to make us indifferent to everything,⁸

¹ "As he came forth naked from his mother's womb, so shall he return. What then doth it profit him that he hath laboured for the wind?" (Eccles. vii. 14.)

² "For all men have one entrance into life, and the like going out." (Wisdom vii. 6.)

³ "For when he shall die he shall take nothing away : nor shall his glory descend with him." (Psalm xlvi. 18.)

⁴ "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen." (Isaias xl. 6.)

⁵ "For when a man shall die, he shall inherit serpents and beasts and worms." (Eccles. x. 13.)

⁶ "Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay, and Thou wilt bring me into dust again." (Job x. 9.)

⁷ "As a dream that fleeth away, he shall not be found ; he shall pass as a vision of the night." (Job xx. 8.)

⁸ "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away : as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done : blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21.)

and as Paul urges,¹ to use this world as if we used it not.

Alas! how foolish have we been to think more of temporal things than of our souls, and as if they and ourselves were to last for ever. Let us pray God to give us sense at last, and to show us the folly of our past disordered life, which has been a bad nightmare. Let us make an act of faith in our future death,² repent and amend.

Point 3.—Death is *near*. Though the devil cannot delude us so far as to persuade us that we are not to die, yet he flatters us with the idea that we have many years of life. But even so, the longest life is quickly over. Yet God says, "Death does not tarry,"³ that "we know not the day nor the hour:"⁴ it may come any time, and a breath may extinguish the spark at any moment,⁵ on a sudden, as has happened to many whom we have known, at an hour when we expect it least.⁶ Then in every hour we should be prepared. Let us renew our faith in this truth, repent our past madness, and resolve to die to every thing and person before they jilt us and die to us.

End with "Our Father."

It will be useful, if one is still attached to person or thing inordinately, and finds it hard to detach himself, for him to make a repetition on "Death" by an application of the senses to his own death, as he can easily do it. When dying it may be said of us, *Incipimus tædere*

¹ "Time is short: it remaineth that they that use this world as if they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31.)

² "Behold now I shall sleep in the dust: and if thou seek me in the morning, I shall not be." (Job vii. 21.) "Who am to be consumed as rottenness, and as a garment that is moth eaten." (Job xiii. 28.)

³ "Remember that death is not slow, and that the covenant of Hell hath been shown to thee." (Ecclus. xiv. 12.)

⁴ St. Mark xiii. 33.

⁵ St. James iv. 14.

⁶ St. Luke xii. 40.

(*de præteritis*) *pavere* (*de futuris*) and *mæsti esse* (*de præsentibus*.)
 These would form three excellent points of meditation.

THE WRECK OF THE BODY BY DEATH.

St. John tells us¹ everything in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life. Let us see what a wreck they make of man's body in its three stages of decay, in the corpse, the skeleton, and the dust.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves over a tomb, and imagine we hear the warning, *Mihi heri, tibi hodie.*²

Prelude 2.—Let us beg of God to show us clearly the vanity of earthly things and the disorder of following our passions, also intense sorrow for having so grievously offended Him by indulgence of the senses.

Point 1.—It is the general opinion that all adults who are lost are lost in consequence of sins of the flesh, or at least have been guilty of them; and that to satisfy the concupiscence of the flesh, they have offended God, sacrificed eternal life, and are damned. But what is this flesh? It is an illusion to suppose that after death it will remain cold, rigid, and loathsome, with open, sightless eyes, ears closed, &c., like a statue. No.³

Let us open the grave a few weeks after death, and see the adders and toads and worms,⁴ examine nose,

¹ "For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever." (1 St. John ii. 16.)

² "Yesterday for me, for thee to-day." (Ecclus. xxxviii. 23.)

³ "Behold the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less man that is rottenness, and the son of man who is a worm?" (Job xxv. 6.)

⁴ "For when he shall die he shall inherit serpents and beasts and worms." (Ecclus. x. 13.)

eyes, mouth, &c.¹ And is this what was so tended, worshipped, and indulged? This the beautiful thing so much admired? This is what was a few months ago so richly clad, so exquisitely perfumed, &c. As rottenness we shall be consumed. Shall we lose our souls for a flesh which is so filthy and shall end thus?

How confounded should we be that we have so sacrificed our souls to our bodies. Oh, henceforth let us crucify our flesh with its vices and concupiscences. Why, my most devoted friends would fly with horror from the sight and stench of my corrupting carcase!

Point 2.—The *skeleton*. Inordinate affection for wealth is a vice too common,² and the root of many evils.³ There is no vice more vile.⁴ And yet man cannot take his riches with him.⁵

Let us open the grave again after a few years have passed, and see the few dry bones which remain, the skull, the ribs, the arms and legs; but tongue, brain, heart, are all gone. Who can distinguish the bones of the King and the beggar, the learned and the clown? And this is the end of riches, a few dry bones!

Let us be confounded at our folly, and shed bitter tears for having given our affections to this tyrant of man, the concupiscence of the eyes.

Point 3.—The *dust*. God formed the body out of the dust to keep us humble, by the constant sight of our bodily origin: but He has determined to humble

¹ "My flesh is clothed with rottenness and the filth of dust, my skin is withered and drawn together." (Job vii. 5.) "Under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering." (Isaias xiv. 11.)

² "For from the least of them even to the greatest, all are given to covetousness." (Jerem. vi. 13.)

³ 1 Timothy vi. 9.

⁴ Eccles. x. 9.

⁵ "As he came forth naked from his mother's womb, so shall he return, and shall take nothing away with him of his labour." (Eccles. v. 14.)

our pride by letting us know that this same body shall return to dust.¹

If we open the grave after many years we shall find only a very thin layer of fine dust. This is the end of worldly greatness. Where are the great soldiers? They are dust. Generals? They are dust. The bodies of statesmen, lawyers, scientists, all end in a handful of dust. We may write on that dust, *Universa vanitas omnis homo vivens*.² The generations trample on the dust of those who have gone before. Every man is dust and ashes.³

Finish with the triple colloquy as before.

In this first part of the Exercises, as we have said more than once, our object is to purge the soul from all vicious affections and to bring it back to God. Now to effect this, St. Ignatius tells us that in our triple colloquy we are to beg of God light for our intellect and firmness of will, as regards our sins, our disordered lives, and the world.

1. With regard to our sins, in order that we may really repent, it is necessary that we know their wickedness.⁴ If we have this grace then we shall have a vivid knowledge and a deep abhorrence of sin, which are necessary for its forgiveness. In the two first exercises we try to acquire this disposition of mind and heart by studying the nature of sin and its punishment, and we try to intensify this disposition by the repetitions.

2. With regard to the inordinate character of our lives, we must know and feel intimately the irregularity of our lives if we are to abhor, amend, and regulate

¹ "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." (Genesis iii. 19.)

² "And indeed all things are vanity: every man living." (Psalm xxxviii. 6.)

³ Eccles. xvii. 31.

⁴ Eccles. i. 18.

them according to right reason. And this not only where there is grievous sin, but in all our actions whether internal or external, in fact in every thought, word, or deed, which is not in order to our last end. This is put before us in the Principle, or Foundation. But we stand in need of special grace to realize thoroughly and to detest cordially the criminality of this irregularity and disorder. To help us to this the following meditations will be very useful.

3. Our conversion to God is never secure and permanent unless we have a full knowledge of the world and its dangers, that we may alienate ourselves from it and mistrust and abhor it as an impostor ever trying to deceive and ruin us.

We pray, then, that we may see through its false maxims, its seductions, and the wretched examples of its votaries; that it is made up of the three concupiscences, sensuality, avarice, and pride; for then there is no doubt we shall abhor it and have nothing in common with it. The meditations on Judgment will help to strengthen us in our resolution to overcome all human respect, to despise the world and its judgments, to mistrust our own judgment and to adapt it to the unerring judgment of God.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us picture ourselves as malefactors in chains before our Judge awaiting sentence.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg grace to apprehend the rigour of this Judgment, that we may see the disorder of our past life and may amend and order our future in accordance with it, not relying on our own or on any other human judgment, but on that of God alone.

Point 1.—Our soul has to appear before the judgment-seat; it may be on the sudden or after full time of preparation. In the instant of death, the soul is confronted with its Judge, and the judgment is passed. From his bed, and from the midst of his friends, &c., the soul has fled to a far-off world, alone, naked, stupefied, gazing on its God of justice. Picture its surprise and terror. In this life sinners presume on account of their number and are protected by their position, or wealth, or cunning, but all these fail the sinner before the just and all-wise Judge. The foresight of this Judgment has turned countless sinners into great saints.

“To escape it is impossible, to appear is intolerable.”¹ And it may be passed upon us at any time and in any place!

Point 2.—Let us consider the shame and confusion at the trial. How different will be the appreciation of good and evil. There will be no excuses which will avail, no forgetting or denying of the charges brought, whether of thoughts, words, or deeds, or omission.² If we should be overwhelmed with shame to feel our faults known by an intimate friend, what will it be to stand revealed before God and His all-pure angels? Bad enough even if we had but one venial sin. Alas, and we so full of sin! Surely we ought to fly from sin with horror and from all occasions of it, if it were only to escape this terrible and overwhelming shame and terror. And then to know that my fate is to be determined for eternity in a few moments.

Point 3.—Our sentence will be just and definitive. Without any counsel or pleading, our case is clear, God and His angels and our own conscience are witnesses, and God Himself is Judge.³

¹ Anselm, *Med.*

² “And all things that are done God will bring into judgment, for every error, whether it be good or evil.” (Eccles. xii. 14.)

³ “I am the Judge and the Witness, saith the Lord.” (Jerem. xxix. 23.)

There is no place for supplication, it is now the hour of justice. And the whole process is over before the body is cold, and while men are praising the dead, he is being, perhaps, insulted by devils in Hell.¹ Let us follow the advice of Ecclesiasticus,² "Before thy Judgment do justice." "May my heart be troubled within me."

Let us in our colloquy pray our Blessed Lord, the Judge of the living and the dead, to be our Advocate now, and to gain mercy for us at the hour of Judgment; let us beg through the precious Wounds in His hands, feet, and side, that He will have mercy on us whilst it is the time of mercy, so that He may not damn us when it is the time of justice. *Iuste iudex ultionis, donum fac remissionis, ante diem rationis.* End with an act of contrition and "Our Father."

REPETITION OF THE PRECEDING.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us hear St. Paul: "It is decreed for all men once to die and after this the Judgment."³

Prelude 2.—Let us beg grace to realize the importance of the Judgment, and with filial fear daily to prepare for it.

Point 1.—Who is my Judge? It is Jesus Christ. He is good and merciful, my Brother and Saviour. Yes! But He is also Infinite Justice, and consequently, such as He shall find us, so will He judge us. The hour and attribute of mercy is over as soon as the soul

¹ "I saw the wicked buried: who also when they were yet living, were in the holy place, and were praised in the city as men of just works: but this also is vanity." (Eccles. viii. 10.)

² Eccles. xviii. 19.

³ Hebrews ix. 27.

is loosed from the body, and it flies at once into the arms of Infinite Justice.

Point 2.—The examination.—Everything will be fully exposed; the benefits and graces which we have received, our sins of ignorance, forgetfulness, dissipation, action, omission, internal and external. Perhaps I flattered myself that they were long since remitted—may be I reckoned on my good works, as if not spoiled by vanity and self-love. Let us examine and judge ourselves now, that then we may not fear the Judgment. *Quid sum miser tunc dicturus, cum vix justus sit securus?*

Point 3.—The sentence.—Hell for one mortal sin. Purgatory for one venial sin. What woe to be separated even for one hour from God and our Lady. Make your colloquy to both.

GENERAL JUDGMENT.

The General Judgment differs from the Particular in three things. In the former, the body and soul appear; in the latter, it is only the soul. In the former, each one will be exposed and judged before the whole human race in the Valley of Jehosophat, and all shall be forced to give praise and honour to the good, and to join in condemnation of the wicked.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine the angels separating the good from the bad, and the Judge with His standard, the holy Cross.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg intense horror of our sins, and contempt for all human respect, which is the source and origin of so many sins.

Point 1.—The exposure.—In this Judgment, the life of each of us will be laid bare, from the cradle to the grave. Our every thought, word, and action, sins of

commission and of omission, all will be exposed in all their meanness and deformity. The graces and benefits which we have received, and those special supernatural favours which have been lavished upon us and won for us by the Passion, Wounds, and Death of our Blessed Lord, all will be proclaimed to the whole human race.

What a weight of obligations we have incurred as children of God and of our Blessed Mother! Men will be filled with wonder at the infinite generosity of God in our regard, but still more at our heartlessness and ingratitude, if we have abused His merciful love and goodness to us. Who can conceive the horrible shame of this exposure of the wicked, and the humble gratitude of the elect?

Point 2.—The manifestation of our return!—The whole world will know our every iniquity and abuse of grace, for God will manifest even the hidden secrets of hearts,¹ and we shall have to confess, “I have sinned, and have returned evil for good.” And we must remember that on that day every one will appreciate sin rightly, with all its malice, ingratitude, and degradation, and all this more intensely when committed by those so especially favoured. Well may we call on the hills to fall on us to crush our shame.

On the other hand, if we have been during life reconciled with God or lived in His holy friendship, how we shall rejoice that in us will be glorified His infinite love and mercy² before the whole world. Oh, let us judge ourselves now with such just severity, that then we may have a Judgment of mercy and clemency.

Point 3.—The sentence will be in accordance with our merit, secundum opera. These we must take with us, or rather they will be there awaiting our coming. If we have violated our duties as creatures, rebelled

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

² St. John xi. 4; 2 Thess. i. 10.

against our Preserver, ignored our Redeemer, been an enemy to our Sanctifier, been unfilial to our Father, despised our King, been a perfidious disciple, &c., or any one of these in grave matters, why then we shall hear, *Discedite a me*, &c.¹ On the other hand, if found not wanting, then we shall be welcomed with, *Venite*, &c.

Let us meditate each word of these two sentences and make our choice. In a spirit of holy compunction, beg of our dear Lord with holy David to pierce your very flesh with holy fear of His judgments.

End with "Our Father."

REPETITION OF THE JUDGMENT.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The history.—The world will be consumed by fire, the dead will arise and meet for Judgment, and will be separated the good from the wicked, Jesus Christ will pass sentence on each; and then the world and time will be over.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves in Jehosophat.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg an intimate realization of the circumstances of the Last Day, that may confirm us in our hatred of sin, in contempt for the world and its vanities, and in a filial fear of the power and justice of God our Lord.

Point 1.—The destruction of the world.—The sun and moon will go out, and the stars shall fall, the earth shall shake and gape, sea shall roar and will be lashed into fury, men will be shrivelled up with fear,² animals and nature will be in a fever to do vengeance for man's treatment of God. Even men will do violence to each other, and multitudes will die of famine, plague, and fright.³

¹ St. Matt. xxv. 41.

² St. Luke xxi.

³ St. Matt. xxiv.

Then all things will be set ablaze and consumed.¹ What folly then to attach ourselves to anything, seeing that it is only fuel for the great fire. And so passeth away the glory of the world. The universal silence will next be broken by the blast of the trumpet and the universal resurrection: *Surgite mortui et venite ad iudicium*. Woe to those who ignored or disbelieved the resurrection. Happy those who have believed and said, *Expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*. Imagine the two great rivers of life as the souls come pouring from Heaven and from Hell to resume their bodies; how fearful the meeting of the latter, how beautiful that of the former; what horror, shame, confusion, and despair, at the union of souls with bodies on the part of the wicked.

Point 2.—The appearance of Jesus Christ.—Angels will then herald the coming of our Lord, bearing His emblem, the holy Cross, to the delight of the good and despair of the wicked. Next He will take His seat, surrounded by all the hosts of the spirit world and resplendent with mighty power and majesty. What a tremendous contrast between this and His first coming! Now Heaven, earth, and Hell itself are bound to join in one great act of adoration of the Man-God and King of creation.

Then shall the great parting take place. The good on the right hand shall lift up their heads, for the hour of their redemption is at hand; but the wicked on the left, full of hatred and despair, will cry out, "These are they whom once we held in derision. We fools esteemed their lives madness, and their end without honour. See how now they are counted amongst the sons of God," &c. The rich are reduced to miserable beggary, superiors to slavery, learned to folly, &c. O God, make us now poor, humble, unknown, and

¹ 2 St. Peter iii. 7.

despised, with Thee, that on that day, with Thee, we may rejoice and glorify Thy mercy.

Then shall the Book be opened, in which all things are contained on which judgment is to be passed, for the glorification of the good, who in life have by tears of repentance and good works repaired their offences and laid up treasures in Heaven, and for the eternal and universal shame of the wicked, whose evil deeds will cling to them—*tua opera sumus non te delinquemus*—and cannot be shaken off.

Point 3.—The sentence.—Venite—come, the winter is over with its storms, its sufferings, its trials, and its tears, come, ye blessed of My Father, blessed in body and in mind—come to your thrones. Your crowns and sceptres are awaiting you. Oh! the glory and the raptures of that great day for the good. Surely this of itself would be reward enough for ages of hard labour and sufferings.

On the other hand, with terrible voice and countenance He will say to the wicked: Depart, begone from Me whom ye would not have, whom ye scorned, despised, and rejected; but take the curse of your God along with you, and begone to everlasting fire. “And these shall go into everlasting torment, but the just into everlasting life.” Heaven’s gates will be flung wide open for the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ and His saints, and the gates of Hell will be closed for ever upon the wretched victims of His wrath. Who can ever dream of exposing himself to the danger of sin, or will harbour any attachment to the riches, pleasures, and honours of this miserable world, when he sees what is to be the end of such folly and madness. Let us pray, *Ne me perdas illâ die*. Here burn, here cut, here spare me not, only spare me for eternity.¹

End with “Our Father.”

¹ Augustine.

THE SHORTNESS OF TIME.

To strengthen us in our detachment from the world and from its seductions, and to increase our contempt for it, is the object of this meditation.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves as criminals brought out to suffer death.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg a deep and practical conviction of the shortness of time and the hollowness of all the things of earth.

Point 1.—Time is short. Some count thirty, forty, may be sixty years. Recalling the years we have lived, how quickly they have gone; and how chequered and painful is the remembrance which they have left behind: "Man living for a short time is filled with many miseries." What remains will likewise go, and with greater apparent rapidity. Take away the time of infancy, time spent in sleep, in meals, and unnecessary amusements, how little serious remains, even in a long life! How many years spent in disgrace before God, how many in a life of tepidity and routine. Alas! how fearfully short have been our lives, and how few the years spent for Heaven and eternity! Almost as few as those spent ordinarily in learning a trade or profession.

Point 2.—Time is short. Job lived until nearly three hundred years old, and yet he counts them as nothing—they are gone quicker than the rider borne along on his courser, than a vessel before the wind, like leaves before the autumn blasts, or a flower just budding when it is trodden underfoot. What then is time to eternity? Count all the seconds of your life, and let us suppose them to be years, still they would be nothing but a

dream to eternity, and yet on the right use of these short days depends our eternity.

Point 3.—Then what a folly to allow ourselves to be affected by the things of this world, by its false and fleeting pleasures, its honours, and all that it boasts of, loves, and esteems. Prudence insists upon it that we should detach ourselves from them; reason declares that an immortal spirit cannot find satisfaction in things which are stamped with mortality; experience proves that they are the vanity of vanities, and that they beget only affliction and nausea. Faith and reason both inculcate the necessity at all times and in all circumstances of regulating our lives with a view to our eternity.

In our colloquy let us earnestly beg this grace of God, and end with "Our Father."

The meditations which have occupied us up till now are calculated to fill us with a holy, salutary fear of God, the Almighty, all wise, all just, and all holy; and at the same time they must have impressed us with a conviction of our own unworthiness, sinfulness, and ingratitude. Were we to end the first part of the Exercises here, there would be danger of our hearts becoming contracted and depressed, and of our abandoning our resolutions to avoid all sin for the time to come, and to order our lives in future, through an absence of holy confidence in God. It is through want of this humble confidence that so many fail to persevere, and find the yoke of God's service bitter, and the burden too heavy. If we would run in the way of God's commandments, and make rapid progress in God's service, it is necessary that we put our confidence in Him, and then we shall be able to say with holy David,¹ "I have run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart," whilst we must

¹ Psalm cxviii. 32.

feel at the same time that of ourselves we are useless servants, and incapable of doing anything good. To inspire this humble and confiding spirit, and at the same time a feeling of gratitude to God, we may make any of the three following meditations. Each of them is calculated also to fill us with those dispositions which are required to make a good confession, which is one of the objects of this first part of the Spiritual Exercises, as we have already said.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE PRODIGAL.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves in the crowd around our Blessed Lord, all attention to His words regarding the Prodigal.

¹ "And He said : A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father : Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country : and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat ; and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said : How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger ? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him : Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee ; I am not now worthy to be called thy child ; make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him : Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to his servants : Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet : and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry : because this my son was dead, and is come to life again, was lost and is found. And they began to be merry." (St. Luke xv. 11—24.)

Prelude 2.—Let us beg a deep sorrow and confusion for having too truly imitated the Prodigal in leaving his father, and the grace to imitate him in his repentance and in his return home.

Point 1.—*His departure.*—Let us consider the happiness of the father and children, as long as they were innocent; happy in their mutual love, happy in having all which they could desire, and honoured and respected by all the household. But as time goes on the younger child begins to feel the weariness and restraint of his home, falls into bad company, joins in idle and mischievous conversations, becomes affected by bad example, indulges in and is carried away by a love of pleasure, gratifies his passions, and ends in a resolution to break loose from restraint and to assert his independence. In vain do his friends and his afflicted father admonish him and try to counsel him. He resents their advice, and disregards their admonitions; and at last, heedless of the pain which his thoughtless and selfish folly inflicts on his parent, he boldly asks for the portion of inheritance destined for him, and resolves to leave his father's roof. Though he has no claim to anything, and has wanted for nothing, the sorrowing father grants his request; and he departs for a far distant country. Surely our Blessed Lord here is giving in prophecy our own history. Oh, how happy were we as from infancy we gradually advanced in years. We were children of our Heavenly Father, who loved us, and whom we loved in return. We wanted for nothing, for in God and in the Holy Ghost within us, and in our elder Brother Jesus, we had all things, and we possessed the title-deeds to eternal glory; and one of God's ministers attended on us as our guardian and protector. But alas! the day when we claimed our free-will from God, and abused it, and

went to a far distant country! How far! *Longe est Dominus ab impiis.*¹

Point 2.—Disorders and miserable state of the Prodigal.—Like the wild ass of the desert,² he lifts his head, and fresh in his freedom, rushes whithersoever he wills, having none for his master; he spends his time in feastings and debauch, in company with false friends and flatterers who sponge upon him. His means at length are exhausted, he contracts debt upon debt, until he loses all credit, is abandoned by his friends, becomes insolvent, and his goods are sold. He is reduced to misery, starvation, and must needs beg for bread, and at last seeks some occupation; but at first in vain, until out of mere compassion, he is accepted as a swine-herd! Poor young man, once so happy, now so worn, so wan, so miserable! He is so poorly fed that he must needs satisfy his hunger by eating of “the husks of which the swine did eat.”

Alas! when the passions break loose, all merit is lost, and we fall from one abyss into another; we are ashamed of our excesses, yet are drawn on by habits, until we reduce ourselves to the level of the brute creation. Still we can never be happy, never contented, there is always a famine in the heart of him who has banished God, for there is nothing on earth that can possibly fill it, or content it. Oh, what a life for one who was the child of God.

Point 3.—The return.—Weak, starved, weary, and despised, he thinks of his father and his home. His father, whom he wounded, insulted, and dishonoured; his home, where he was once so respected, and where he was so happy, whilst now herè he is perishing with hunger. And in his father's house the lowest menial has plenty of food, and abounds with bread. He resolves within himself to arise at once and go, he will

¹ Prov. xv. 29.

² Job xxiv. 5.

tell his father that he is sorry, that he has sinned, that he has forfeited his sonship, and will be happy to be as a servant. The way is long, he may die on the way; his injured father may spurn him from his door; his equals, and the very servants, may mock and scoff at him. Be it so, he will go, and go at once. Let us follow him. He falls, but rises again, and persists on his way; often he rests through weakness and fatigue. A thousand thoughts agitate his soul. Does his father live? What will he say? How shall he answer? Meanwhile the good old man is thinking of and mourning for his child, and while yet afar off, love gives keenness to that father's eye, and he goes forth to meet his penitent child, kisses him, and orders fresh robes to be brought, and rings and sandals for his hands and feet, and a great banquet to be prepared to celebrate the return of the long-lost child. Here is our title-deed to a welcome from our Heavenly Father, if, like the Prodigal, we return to Him. Let us imitate him in humility, in sorrow, in breaking loose from our evil habits and occasions of sin, and then we may rely upon a like reception from our Father who is in Heaven.

Make your colloquy to our Blessed Mother, to Jesus Christ, and to the Eternal Father, giving thanks, confessing the ingratitude of the past, making resolutions for the future, and praying for the grace of unswerving confidence for the time to come.

End with "Our Father."

NOTE.—For those who are striving to lead a good life, but yet are at times inclined to relax their efforts, and to grow sluggish and indifferent, and to indulge in independence, self-ease, &c., this allegory may be usefully applied for the acquiring and confirming of our resolutions to amend, and for the strengthening of our confidence in the loving mercy of God our Father.

CONVERSION OF ST. PETER.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Brief history of the contemplation. We read that Peter, full of love for Jesus Christ, after protesting thrice that he would never betray Him, put himself into the occasion of doing so, and fell: but by the loving glance of our Blessed Lord, and the crowing of the cock, he is recalled to repentance, and by his tears he regained forgiveness.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine Peter going apart, weeping and beating his breast.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, namely, that Jesus would look mercifully upon us, and move us also to repentance, and to true confidence.

Point 1.—Let us see the call of Peter. No sooner was he called than he boldly and generously responded, giving himself to Jesus, and abandoning all else.² His fervour and love never flagged. He was the first to confess his faith in the Divinity of the Son of Man, and was especially blest and favoured by our Lord.

Here let us reflect how He has also called us at least to His Holy Church, whereby we become members of His family and of His mystical Body. And when we made our First Communion, how fervent we were, how

¹ "But Peter sat without in the court; and there came to him a servant-maid saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: that I know not the man. And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them. Then he began to curse and to swear, that he knew not the man." (St. Matt. xxvi. 69—75.)

² "Then Peter answering said to Him: Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee." (St. Matt. xix. 27.)

we pledged to Him our love, and our resolution to cling to Him, and never again to abandon Him.

So during the three years we see Peter casting out devils, present on Thabor at the Transfiguration, at the Last Supper, refusing to allow Jesus to wash his feet, &c. We too for a time perhaps were fervent and faithful. Or if called to Religion, we at first were so fervent, and diligent in prayer and all other duties, &c.

Point 2.—His fall.—In the Garden he sleeps thrice, even though twice awaked by his Master, and told to pray. Then he follows Him from afar; next goes and warms himself, and joins the bad company gathered round the fire, and so he falls. Alas! what a fearful fall. Have we too, favoured like St. Peter with special graces, grown remiss in prayer, sought self-ease, indulged in evil or worldly company, acted through vanity or other perverse intention, and so come to fall? How often do we find that by neglect of prayer, by self-indulgence, and by a worldly spirit, we gradually expose ourselves to fall.

Point 3.—His repentance.—He at once abandons the occasions of his sin, is overwhelmed with shame and horror, and for the rest of his life his cheeks became furrowed by the big, hot tears he shed daily; and he hurries off to the house where Mary was staying with some disciples to tell them of his crime and to seek for comfort.

But how did Jesus treat him? His first apparition is to him. He prays that his faith may never fail. He appoints him His Vicar, and the visible foundation and Head of His Church. Oh! what a lesson for us. If He thus spared His favoured Apostle, so also will He spare us if, like Peter, we repent, and fly from the occasions which expose us to sin, and try to imitate his love and confidence.

End with a colloquy to our Blessed Lady and to our Blessed Lord. "Our Father."

CONVERSION OF MAGDALENE.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The brief history is recorded by St. Luke, c. vii.¹

Prelude 2.—Let us place ourselves in the dining-hall of Simon the Pharisee, where Mary is kneeling, weeping at the feet of Jesus.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we most should desire, that we may hear the call of our Blessed Lord, and may return to His love and never again be separated from Him.

Point 1.—Earnestly had our Lord longed for the conversion of Mary. She was gifted with beauty, in the full bloom of life, favoured with talent, and affable

¹ "And standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee who had invited Him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This Man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said to him: Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most? Simon answering said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said to him: Thou hast judged rightly. And turning to the woman he said unto Simon: Dost thou see this woman? I entered thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed My feet; wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And He said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. . . . And He said to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." (St. Luke vii. 38—50.)

of speech; and consequently men easily fell a prey to her charms. Her dress and general bearing, as well as her position in society, all made her more dangerous; and her dissipated life, her unbridled passion, and her vanity entangled her more every day in the chains and bonds of the world and of sin. All her gifts were employed by her against her God who had bestowed them on her.

But on a day she saw a crowd round the house of Simon, and approached and entered the hall. She looked upon the open face of Jesus, on which modesty was enshrined, she heard the gentle words that fell from His lips, and became rapt in attention—her heart was inflamed with love and confidence, for His words were especially adapted to her. Grace masters her; and full of indignation at the haughty and inhospitable manner in which He had been received by His host, she dishevels her hair, flings herself on her knees at His feet, washes His feet with her tears, and wipes them with her hair, and anoints them with precious ointment. Her heart meanwhile is broken with grief at the loathsome sight of the corruption of her soul and her many iniquities, and pleads for mercy, feeling confidence that her prayer will be heard. Let us consider how guilty we too have been, how many inspirations we have received; of how many sins of commission and omission, of scandal and bad example, we have been guilty. And when the same Jesus calls us and urges us to return, how sadly different is our answer to His call. Where is our sorrow? What our thoroughness in giving up the occasions of sin, and rooting out our inordinate attachments.

Point 2.—The predominant feeling in Magdalene was that of love of our Lord: she feels that He alone can still the tempest in her soul. His every sense attracts her, and convinces her that He will forgive all,

and will heal her wounded spirit. And her confidence was well founded. For Jesus addresses His pharisaical host and declares to him that her many sins are forgiven her, and turning to her He says, "All thy sins are forgiven thee. Go now in peace."

He utters no word of reproach, but welcomes her and encourages her, filling her soul with perfect peace. Let us imitate the thoroughness of Magdalene, and we shall meet with the same reception on the part of our Blessed Lord, *Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in illum*¹—"The Lord is good to them that trust in Him."

Point 3.—Magdalene by a single blow broke asunder all the chains of wantonness and profane love which bound her. She abandoned all worldly show and vanity, and all human respect. She bids an eternal farewell to all her former friends and partners in guilt, holding them in abomination. In her trials and temptations she remains staunch and faithful, supported by her love of and confidence in our Blessed Lord: who on His side makes her sacrifices sweet and pleasant to her, and fills her soul with holy joy. He comforts her, commends her, boldly and openly defends her, and declares that what she has done shall be announced throughout the whole world wheresoever His Gospel shall be preached. He honours her by choosing her to be present at His Death at the foot of the Cross, and by appearing to her the first of all women after His Death, if we except, of course, His own Blessed Mother.

But what is the goodness of our Lord to Magdalene compared with what He has shown to us? He has not once, but times without number pronounced His forgiveness of our manifold sins. He has heaped endless graces upon us. He has given us the greatest of all gifts, His own adorable Body and Blood, that we may not only possess Him, but that He may be our very

¹ Lament. iii. 29.

food, and that not once or on rare occasions, but as often as we choose to receive Him. Oh, who will not love Him then, who will not have unbounded confidence in Him? Who will hesitate to give himself to Jesus, who has given Himself thus to us?

In our colloquy let us say with our whole hearts:
O Jesus, Thou has conquered. I throw myself a contrite sinner at Thy sacred feet. Vouchsafe to receive Thy poor and unworthy suppliant, and henceforth may I be Thine alone.

End with "Our Father."

THE SECOND WEEK.

THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY.

1. LIKE the Israelites, who after long years of slavery in Egypt, at length were rescued by God under the guidance of His servant Moses, from their cruel captivity and from the miseries which they endured under the galling tyranny of the Pharoahs, so have we been, by the loving mercy of the same God, freed from the far heavier slavery and more terrible oppression of the devil, that enemy of our human nature, and from the more fearful miseries in which our sins and inordinate affections have plunged us. The chains with which our unbridled passions and the wiles of the devil had bound us have been broken, and we have once again been set free.

2. But before the people of Israel could reach the land which God promised them, the land flowing with milk and honey, they had to spend forty years in much suffering; they had to endure hunger and thirst, they had to wander in long journeyings and weary watchings amidst the barren sands of the desert; and in constant and hard-fought battles they had to overcome powerful enemies who often seemed to threaten them with certain destruction. "By the mercy of the Lord they were not consumed," but at length under His special guidance and protection they attained the end of their journey. We, too, after attaining our freedom are to

make our way to the promised land, to our everlasting country; but our road lies through a desert land, and is beset with many hardships and dangers, and at any time and in all times we are exposed to the fierce assaults of the enemy of our human nature, and to the no less dangerous attacks of our own rebellious passions and vicious inclinations, and must be constantly on our guard against surprises and ready to combat and repel our foes.

3. This is the reason why in this second part of the Exercises St. Ignatius so often speaks of war and conquest, and represents our Blessed Lord as our King and Captain, "Our Lord is a Man of war,"¹ the Captain of the elect; whilst he represents the devil as the arch-rebel and the head of the hosts of darkness.

4. In all the contemplations we see the spiritual warfare we are called upon to wage, against the devil, the world, and our corrupt nature, and against our undue attachment to the persons and things of this world.

5. In order that we in our fallen nature might succeed in attaining our journey's end, it was necessary that our Lord should come to point out to us our way, and that He should pay our ransom, and should provide us with the weapons and means of securing the victory,² and should be "our way, our truth, and our life."³ Therefore He came with our ransom in one hand, with a sword in the other,⁴ and He put Himself at our head, and combats with us. He sets us in His Life an example which, in whatever state of life we may be, is eminently *practical*, and is also *glorious*, for as He has

¹ Exodus xv. 3.

² "But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 57.)

³ St. John xiv. 6.

⁴ "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but the sword." (St. Matt. x. 34.)

conquered and been crowned with victory, so also shall we share in the fruits of that victory, if only we imitate Him in the strife.

6. Now to do this and to mould ourselves upon Him, we must apply ourselves to study Him, and acquire a practical knowledge of Him; of His exterior and interior, His conduct, His virtues, His ideas, His intentions and maxims. The fruit of this knowledge will be great admiration, and the result of this will be a corresponding energy and ambition to imitate Him.

7. To render ourselves like Jesus Christ, and conformable to His image, is the one great object of the Christian's life, and is the condition without which it is impossible to please God and secure eternal happiness, as St. Paul teaches, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son: that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren."¹ Some of course are called to a more, some to a less perfect resemblance and imitation, according to the measure of God's grace imparted to them and the nature of the vocation to which God in His providence may call them. This depends entirely upon His own free choice; but all Christians are bound in their several states to a certain degree of imitation.

8. Those who are called to the closest imitation and to the mixed life of contemplation, with the addition of the active life, as in the Society of Jesus, are bound to be pre-eminently skilled and exercised in this part of the Exercises,² as without this we can hardly hope to procure effectually the greater glory of God, to strip ourselves of all self-love and worldly affections and attachments, and to be men dead to the world, crucified to the world, and to whom the world is crucified, and to be ready, should it be the good pleasure of God, to

¹ Romans viii. 29.

² *Direct.* x. § 6.

lay down life itself in promoting the greater glory of Him who has selected us to this exalted vocation.

9. In this imitation of our Blessed Lord, the second degree of perfection in following His example will be to excel in the practice of poverty in spirit, by rooting out every inclination to anything on earth, and to all those comforts or conveniences which are the results or concomitants of riches, whether material or intellectual, natural or even spiritual, in the sense in which we considered them in the Principle or Foundation.

The third degree will be to imitate our Blessed Lord also in His actual poverty, such as we witness in His Life from the manger of Bethlehem to the sepulchre on Calvary, and in His humility and humiliations during the same time.

10. Many cannot understand why St. Ignatius would have us meditate on the mysteries of the Life of our Blessed Lord according to the points which he has given at the end of the book after "Three Methods of Prayer," whereas at the beginning of the exercises of the Illuminative Way, in the meditations on the Incarnation and Nativity, he draws out quite different points, considering the Persons, Words, and Actions involved in these mysteries, and then desires us to make use of the same form in all the other mysteries. The explanation is that in these two mysteries he lays down the form and manner of meditating each mystery, that we may the better understand the matter of each of the points, and derive greater fruit and entertainment from them, by this consideration of the persons, their words, or interior thoughts or sentiments and actions, as they occur in the respective points of the mystery. These latter do not constitute the points, but rather are proposed as considerations suitable and adapted to each point.

11. With regard to the other persons who intervene

in any of the mysteries, we may consider their words or sentiments, observe their actions, and gather from everything which occurs reflections and sentiments for our spiritual profit; but we must in an especial manner regard and study the Person of our Blessed Lord, drawing from Him the chief and main lessons of the behaviour and conduct we are to observe in order to glorify, praise, and serve God as He did; that thus we may imprint on our understanding and will, and implant in our soul, the form and model of the Life of Jesus Christ.

If, with a sincere and humble desire, we persevere and are constant in the practice of this method of prayer, we shall at length attain the state of St. Ignatius, who could neither speak nor act without reflecting first how Jesus would have spoken or acted in similar circumstances. What wonder that it was once said of him, that if the *Imitation of Christ* should be quite lost, it would suffice to look at St. Ignatius, and read it in all his actions.

12. We must also take notice that in the contemplations there is prescribed an additional prelude before the two which we have used in the preceding meditations. In it we take a cursory view of the history of the mystery which we are going to contemplate, not part by part as we do in the contemplation itself, but only in general. Thus we take a general view of some fine painting before entering on a minute investigation of the beauties of its several parts.¹

13. During this part of our retreat certain changes are to be made in the Additions and Annotations, as St. Ignatius tells us at the end of his fifth contemplation. Thus:

In the second Addition: We are, upon awaking, to turn our mind to the contemplation which we are going

¹ *Direct.* xix. § 4.

to make, with an earnest desire to know the Eternal and Incarnate Word, that thereby we may serve Him better and may follow Him more closely.

In the sixth Addition: We are frequently to recall the memory of the Life and mysteries of Christ our Lord, from His Incarnation up to that on which we are next going to meditate.

In the seventh Addition: We must make use of obscurity or light, of the fine weather or not, just as far as they may conduce to kindle those affections and sentiments which are suitable to and in accord with the mystery which we have in hand.

In the tenth Addition: We must, above all, earnestly practise internal mortification, withdrawing every affection of our hearts from all worldly things to fix them on God alone; and we must frequently excite in ourselves ardent desires to love and glorify Him at all cost, for this is the main scope of this part of the retreat.

14. St. Ignatius also observes that sometimes, even though the exercitant be of vigorous and robust constitution, it is of advantage to introduce some change by way of variety for some days, either as to the hours, or the number, or both, of the exercises and contemplations, but always with a view to the end.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

1. Having by God's grace laid aside the old man of sin, and resolved to regulate and order our lives for the time to come, we ask with St. Paul, "O Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" or with St. Peter, "O Lord, to whom shall we go?" And the answer which we receive is, "Come and follow Me." With this call of our Blessed Lord we now wish to comply, and hence it

is the first object of our meditation in commencing the part of the exercises of the Illuminative Way.

As the Foundation of all spiritual life is the end of man, so the Principle and Foundation of the second and third part of the Exercises, which treat of the Life, and of the Passion and Death of our Lord, is what St. Ignatius calls "The Kingdom of Christ." For imitation of Him involves three things, namely, knowledge and love of His Person, a clear understanding of the cause which He represents, and which we are called upon to embrace, and a thorough appreciation of the degree of generosity with which we should devote ourselves to His cause. We can then enter in detail into His Life and derive the profit from its several mysteries which a careful study of them is calculated to produce in our souls.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine the cities, towns, and villages through which amidst fatigues, poverty, and ignominy our Lord passed evangelizing His Kingdom.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg what we earnestly desire, namely, not to be deaf to His call, but promptly and diligently to fulfil His most holy will.

Point 1.—Let us first by way of allegory picture to ourselves a King uniting in himself all those qualities which are calculated to challenge esteem, respect, love, and enthusiasm, holding his authority directly from God, who has placed him on the throne, and ruling over wide dominions, with many princes as his tributaries. Under the guidance of Heaven he undertakes to proclaim a crusade against the infidels, and to reduce the countries possessed by them; and he invites all to join him in this grand enterprise. He requires from whosoever shall respond to his call the following conditions: that he must be ready to put up with the same usage and treatment as his King, to bear cheerfully the same

hardships of hunger, and thirst, and watching, the same fatigues and dangers. On the other hand, when the war is over, and the victory which is assured by God is won, he shall share in the fruits of the conquest, in its happiness and glory, according as he has been a partner in the toils and dangers of the strife. Doubtless every loyal subject, and especially those of noble and princely stock, would pledge themselves with one voice to this courteous and generous monarch, to follow him with the greatest promptitude and devotedness whithersoever he might be pleased to lead them. Whosoever should demur or hesitate would be an object of pity, ridicule, and contempt, and would be branded as a coward, especially in such a noble cause, on such royal conditions, and under such a generous and magnanimous sovereign.

Point 2.—Let us now come to the reality, and see in the first place, (a) Who is this King? He is the only-begotten Son of God, the Lord and Master of the universe, whose subjects we are by nature, and to whom we essentially owe all homage, all respect and love.

(β) This mighty Prince has freely descended from Heaven to earth on purpose to subject to the will and love of His Father all mankind, and, having subdued the world, the flesh, and the devil, to secure the triumph of God's glory in time and for eternity.

This design is infinitely *noble* and *excellent*; it is an enterprise as *generous* as it is *unselfish*, worthy of the Infinite Being who comes to put it into execution. And how *glorious* it is to know, love, and glorify God, we may judge from the fact that the Son of God Himself, who wanted for nothing, and is the Infinite Wisdom, deemed it meet to come upon this earth and devote His mortal Life to cares, sorrows, labours, His Passion

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and Death, to execute it, and to be our companion and model in effecting the same.¹

How happy should we be not only to be invited, but also enrolled as Christians (how much more if Religious), to promote this glorious work in ourselves and others! Let us return Him most heartfelt thanks for the sublime dignity of our state, and rouse ourselves to noble and generous resolutions to achieve great feats for God's greater glory.

(γ) What must all men of sound sense and reason resolve, but to do at least this much, namely, to offer up themselves without reserve to the undertaking? Those, however, who ambition to distinguish and signalize themselves in the service of their Eternal King and universal Lord, will not be contented merely by making a complete offering of themselves to praise, serve, and glorify God, but will make an offering of still greater value, namely, to take the offensive and make an onslaught on their own sensual inclinations and on carnal and worldly love, so as not simply to force and keep them within bounds, but to give them no quarter, till they are annihilated. The watchword of such is death to the senses, death to persons and things, except in and for my King's service, and death to the spirit and love of the world.

This and nothing short of this is the real spirit of a true Jesuit, embodied in the eleventh and twelfth rules of the Summary of the Constitutions. In this spirit we should conclude this meditation, saying: "Eternal Lord of all things, with Thy favour and help I now declare in presence of Thy infinite goodness, and in the sight of Thy glorious Mother and of all the Saints of Thy heavenly court, that it is my wish and desire and my deliberate determination, provided it is for Thy greater

¹ "It is great glory to follow the Lord, for length of days shall be received from Him." (Ecclus. xxiii. 38.)

service and praise, to imitate Thee in bearing all kinds of injuries, reproaches, and complete poverty both in spirit and actual, if Thy most holy Majesty will vouchsafe to choose me for and receive me in such a state of life."

End with the "Our Father."¹

NOTE 1.—If we compare this meditation with the Foundation, we see that the latter requires from us *indifference* as to riches, honour, pleasure, and all other things, and places us amongst those who have sound sense and are guided by right reason, whereas from the former we are prompted by a holy ambition to go still further and to distinguish ourselves by a *practical hostility* to all these things and to embrace their contraries, as poverty, contempt, suffering, &c.

2. In the final oblation of ourselves we must observe that if we are in Religion, God in His goodness has already chosen us, and that we only renew the offering which we have already made, and freely ask, if He thinks it well, to have our sincerity tested by fresh trials, provided He will give us the grace to bear them.

REPETITION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual. The first and second preludes as in the preceding meditation.

Part I.—The allegory of an earthly King.

Point I.—Let us picture this King specially chosen by God as was David, and consequently possessed of legitimate *authority*, and endowed with all *power* required

¹ Conf. *Direct.* xviii. *ix.*

to uphold his authority—that his jurisdiction extends over all Christian peoples as well as over their rulers, and that he possesses all the qualities that beseem such a sovereign: the piety of a David, the wisdom of a Solomon, the wide sway of a Charlemagne, the patriotism of a Sobieski, and the sanctity of a Louis. Add to all this that he knows and loves all and each of the very lowest of his people. Judge, if you can, what would be the devotedness of such a people, and their happiness under such a monarch!

Point 2.—Let us consider his proposal. It is, under the guidance of God, to bring under the yoke of Christ all infidel nations, and he invites the co-operation of both princes and peoples on the following terms: they shall all have the same clothing, food, and lodging: they shall all suffer alike hunger, thirst, watching, and the other hardships of war, cold and heat, long and weary marches, and perhaps severe wounds: but he will be ever by their side. There is nothing to fear, for the victory is secure by the promise of God; and when the strife is over and the battle won, each will share in the fruits and spoils of victory in proportion to his toils, fatigues, and dangers. Whereas those who have refused to accept his call will be consigned to a lingering and miserable slavery under the cruel rule of the infidel.

Imagine such a proposal made to a knightly soldier, and conceive, if you can, with what enthusiasm it would be accepted.

Point 3.—Let us reflect what every good subject would reply to so liberal and humane a sovereign, and how he would be spurned as a coward and mean-spirited cavalier, who should turn a deaf ear to such a proposal. See with what zeal men volunteer in case their country is going to war. And yet they fight for a sovereign who does not know them; they are exposed to terrible

dangers and hardships, have very little chance of promotion, and many chances of sickness and death, and victory, to say the least, is very doubtful. What, then, would be the wild enthusiasm of men at the terms such as we have been meditating? They would give their whole souls to the enterprise, and be ever on the strain to rush forward on their enemies, nor would they rest until they had crushed them.

Part 2.—The application.

Point 1.—Who is our King? Jesus Christ, who is actually and truly King, the Eternal King, the universal King, King by *nature*, for all sovereignty is in God and comes from God. King by *birth*, the only-begotten, consubstantial Son, and heir of all things,¹ King by *merit*, having all kingly attributes.² King by *election*,³ universal,⁴ King omnipotent,⁵ King by *conquest*,⁶ and by purchase,⁷ King *eternal*, and to be adored by all.⁸

Point 2.—The enemies against whom He would enlist us are the world, the flesh, and the devil. St. Ignatius only mentions sensuality, carnal and worldly love, because these are the three principal enemies of God's *Kingdom inside us*, which, if conquered, the other two will be powerless against us. Now by *sensuality* we understand the pleasures and allurements of the *senses*; by *carnal love*, the love of bodily comfort, of health, and of life, and also the love not purely spiritual for parents, relations, and friends; by *worldly love*, the love of those things which the world loves, such as riches, honour, vainglory, display, &c. Our enterprise, then, is against spiritual enemies,⁹ and our warfare, therefore, is spiritual. And further, this being so, unless we overcome them in things which are lawful, they will easily drag us into unlawful excesses. It is to

¹ St. John i. 18.

² Coloss. ii. 9.

³ Psalm ii. 6.

⁴ Psalm ii. 8.

⁵ St. Matt. xxviii.

⁶ Apoc. v. 9.

⁷ 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 St. Peter ii. 9.

⁸ Psalm lxxi. 11.

⁹ Ephes. vi. 12.

this combat and to this victory that Jesus Christ calls all Christians, and especially men like ourselves, whom He has chosen to bear His name, to wear His own uniform, whom He has raised up from the earth and from neediness, and from the dunghill, that He might place us in the rank of His princes. He calls us especially to share in His poverty, to keep Him company in His labours, humiliations, opprobrium, insults, and contempt, and then we are later to share His eternal glory.¹

Could there be conditions more just, more noble, more glorious?

Point 3.—Let us further ask ourselves what should be our response to this call, considering the station we occupy, the claims upon us from the frequent forfeitures of His grace, which He has overlooked, and what the Church, and even the world itself expect from us? Surely that we should at all times be renewing our attacks upon these enemies of ourselves and of our King, and be ever taking the aggressive against them. With reason would the angels and saints cry shame at us, and if the world knew it, it too would despise us if we were content with anything less.

Renew the offering as at the end of the last meditation.

NOTE 1.—The imitation of Jesus is truly an expedition in which we are perpetually exposed to attack and must ever be prepared to fight. In following Him we are, however, sure of victory. The plan of campaign is drawn out for each of us, and its faithful execution leads to glory. And our King and Captain provides us with abundant means of doing so, namely, renunciation, self-sacrifice, prayer, and good works.

2. In this meditation we see for the first time

¹ St. Matt. xix. 29; 2 Cor. iv. 17.

insinuated the different grades in the army of Christ, namely, one which observes the Ten Commandments, another which embraces the Evangelical Counsels, and the third is marked by the vocation to the Apostolate.

3. In each there are some who hold the privileged posts. These are they whose motto is, *Agere contra*, and whose badge is the death's head and cross bones, the badge of the Society.

4. Henceforth the exercitant can read the mysteries as recounted in the Gospels, or a chapter of the *Imitation of Christ*, or some of the Lives of the Saints.

ANOTHER REPETITION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

(For those who are Religious.)

Our object is now to know Jesus Christ, for then we shall be full of admiration for Him, and shall make practical efforts to imitate Him. It is this real knowledge of Him which is eternal life. But alas! how rare is this knowledge become! No! Jesus is not known even by many ecclesiastics or even Religious. They are content to dwell with Him on the mountain and to contemplate Him in His Transfiguration; they will abide with Him during the breaking of bread, but how few are brave enough to go and gaze at Him on Mount Calvary, and to drink of the chalice which He drank!

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us picture our Lord before us, amiable in all His features, modest and lowly. His clothing is poor but decent, and there is a halo of majesty round His Head.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg what we wish from our heart,

namely, the grace to understand thoroughly His invitation, that He would by His grace move us to accept it, and lead us to a better imitation of Him.

Point 1.—Who is Jesus Christ? He is *the King*. As *God*, He it is by whom all things are made,¹ and who beareth all things by the word of His power.² In Him we all live, move, and have our being.³ He is a King of “tremendous majesty,”⁴ and of His Kingdom there is no end, and to Him the heavens and the earth are subject. As *man* He is a King to whom all power is given, and absolute dominion, and on His assumption of our nature the angelic hosts were bidden to adore Him. As *man* He paid the price of our redemption and acquired possession of us. In His mortal life He proved Himself a King by the royal manifestation of all Kingly attributes, and before His tribunal as Supreme Judge every soul must appear at its separation from its body, and to such as have been faithful to Him He will give the crown of life.⁵

Point 2.—What is the imitation of Christ? In order to establish the Kingdom of God amongst men, we must mortify our passions, must renounce self; we must give no quarter to any inordinate attachment. It is not enough to contemplate the amiability of our Lord, and to dwell on His promises, we must practise the abnegation which He preaches. We must never forget that “he who hates not father and mother, &c., cannot be My disciple,” and again, “He that wishes to come after Me must take up his cross daily,” &c.

Of course there are various degrees in the practice of these lessons, but for the perfection of it, such as is required in a Religious, the renunciation must be absolute. Alas! how many give more liberty to the love of their relations than those who have never left the world.

¹ 1 St. John i. 3. ² Hebrews i. 3. ³ Acts xvii. 28.

⁴ St. Matt. xxv. ⁵ Apoc. ii. 10.

Point 3.—The reward? The reward is the Kingdom of Heaven—a happiness unspeakable and eternal. And even in this life, Jesus sweetens our toils, by the hundred-fold which He has promised. If we seek first the Kingdom of God, even our temporal wants will be abundantly provided for. Nor will God allow even a hair of our heads to be hurt, or if He does He will provide that it shall end in our greater glory, and will encourage us by His own example to love those very persecutions and sufferings which in the estimation of the world are most dreadful. "We fools esteemed their lives madness," &c. And if to us the yoke of Christ seems hard, it is because we have only touched it with our finger. Let us seize it, put it on our shoulder, and embrace it, and it will become sweet and easy, and will support us.¹

Point 4.—The motives? The first motive to give ourselves up entirely and without reserve to this imitation is that He has planed the way for us by His example, subjecting Himself in Life and Death to poverty, ignominy, and most bitter sufferings to gain this Kingdom and glory, though due to Him on so many titles, "It behoved Christ to suffer and so to enter into His glory."² How cheerfully, then, should I, His vassal, and a most miserable wretch, who for my disloyalty and frequent treasons richly deserved to be cast into Hell, follow Him along the same road and willingly undergo any hardships and pains for the same end.

The second motive is that if I bear Him company in His sorrows and sufferings I shall certainly share with Him in His glory and in His Kingdom. "If we

¹ "Bear the cross willingly, and it will carry you, and lead you to the longed-for good, where there shall be an end of suffering, though it will not be here." (*Imitation of Christ*, bk. ii. c. xiii.)

² St. Luke xxiv. 26.

suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."¹ In fact, all the advantages arising from the victory over our passions, over the world and the devil, will be for ourselves, and we shall enjoy them through an endless eternity. Therefore, if we have any common-sense at all, or any regard for our solid welfare, we cannot but consecrate ourselves entirely and with all earnestness to this imitation.

End again with the same offering as in the preceding meditation, and "Our Father."

We might add in the repetitions, several powerful considerations calculated to inspire us with still greater earnestness in offering ourselves up to the service of our Eternal King: as

(a) It is *right* and *proper*. For He has every claim upon us, by creation, conservation, lordship, sovereignty, and redemption. Further, for whatever we have, we are absolutely dependent upon Him, and for each of us He became Man and was crucified. He paid our ransom, and merited glory for us.² He supports and helps us by His grace.

(β) It will *pay us well*. It is the only means of securing the liberty of the children of God. If we do not follow Christ, we must become the slaves of His enemies, and cut ourselves off from all real peace; and exchange our true glory for foul disgrace. It is true that at *first* it is hard, it is a yoke. It is hard to *begin* the way of the Lord, but as the Holy Spirit tells us,³ "When thou shalt have entered, thy steps shall not be straitened, and when thou runnest, thou shalt not meet a stumbling-block." And the secure hope of an infinite

¹ Romans viii. 17.

² "Forget not the kindness of thy surety, for He hath given His Life for thee." (Eccles. xxix. 19.)

³ Prov. iv. 12.

and eternal reward will make all smooth and easy to us. The example of the saints and the unction of Divine grace, will animate and strengthen us. *Quid times? quid dubitas? Vocat te magni concilii angelus quo nemo est sapientior, nemo fortior, nemo fidelior.*¹

(γ) It is *necessary*. If we do not freely follow Jesus Christ, then we must be victims of the vilest slavery; for we become the slaves of our sordid passions, of the world, and of the devil, the three greatest and meanest tyrants of mankind; and in the end we must incur eternal torments in the prison prepared for the devil and his angels.

(δ) It is *glorious* and *just*.² Great is the glory to follow the Lord, it is the real pathway of glory on *earth*; trodden by Christ first and by the glorious choirs of confessors, virgins, martyrs, and doctors, by all that has ever been the best, the wisest, and the greatest in humanity, by those who have ennobled our race. It is glorious in Heaven hereafter. "Truly the tribulations of this world are not worthy to be compared with the weight of glory that shall be revealed in us."³ "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."⁴

¹ "Why dost thou fear? or why dost thou waver? Behold it is the Angel of the great Council who calls thee, than whom none is wiser, none stronger, none more loyal and true." (St. Bernard.)

² Ecclus. xxiii. 38.

³ Romans viii. 18.

⁴ 2 Timothy ii. 12.

THE INCARNATION.

PART I.—THE ANNUNCIATION.¹

Thrice daily Holy Church puts this mystery before her faithful children in inviting them to recite the *Angelus*.

At these times Religious may fitly and profitably renew their vows of Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty, at least mentally; the first at the words, "The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary," &c.; the second at the words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," &c.; the third at the words, "And the Word was made Flesh," &c. Such a devotion, being essentially solid and not interfering with any other duty, nor involving any strain of mind, is at least commendable.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how the Three Divine Persons, seeing the human race falling into Hell in consequence of sin, decree that the Second Person shall become Man for their salvation, and how in the fulness of time God sends the Archangel Gabriel to our Lady, who assents to become the Mother of the Eternal Word, and He puts on human nature in her most pure womb.

Prelude 2.—Let us take a bird's-eye view of the earth, and in particular the cottage of our Lady at Nazareth.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg an intimate knowledge of our

¹ "And in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou amongst women." (St. Luke i. 26—28.)

Lord, who is going to become Man for us, that we may love Him more dearly, and may follow Him more nearly.

Point 1.—The Salutation of the Angel.—Let us look upon mankind scattered over the face of the earth. Their first parent had been created to the image and likeness of God, but that likeness had been lost. If we except the Jews, all other nations were alike ignorant of the true God and of their origin from Him. Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome all alike plunged in idolatry and degrading vices: while the Eastern peoples, less skilled in art and letters, had also lost the primary traditions on the works of God and His worship. And all these nations divided by interests, customs, place, and mutual hatred and suspicion, differing in language, colour, and features, striving against each other in fierce battle or in private deeds of violence, whilst multitudes groaned and dragged on their lives in slavery. Those in power carnal and selfish, the wise steeped in pride and split up into sects. Heads of families having power of life and death over their children. Priests a class of idolaters and monstrous impostors. The poor trampled underfoot, and ready at all times to rise up against the rich. All were born, lived, and died with God's anger on their heads—all alike slaves of concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. Nor did their *speech* belie either their actions or their thoughts and desires. Their throats were gaping sepulchres, their mouths full of cursing and bitterness,¹ and of vain boasting,² of falsehood.³ As to their *occupations*, some votaries of pleasure, others working for gain, some fighting, others embracing, some dying, others being born, some laughing, others weeping, &c. What a frightful sight for the eyes of God, what a hoarse and discordant roar from the

¹ Psalm xiii. 3.

² Psalm xi. 3.

³ Psalm cxviii. 85.

mouths of men struck and grated upon His ears. Worse than the desert, where not a blade of grass shows life amid the universal death, there was no sign of supernatural life. "The Lord," says holy David,¹ "looked down from Heaven upon the sons of men—all had gone astray, and were useless together; there was not one who was doing good, not even one." In His infinite compassion He resolves upon a remedy for this awful evil; no fires from heaven to destroy His enemies, no floods to drown them and their crimes and blasphemies: but it is resolved that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity shall assume man's nature, shall redeem it and reinstate it. *Misericordia tua Domine plena est terra.*² Who can love this wretched world: this land of misery, of sorrow, of hypocrisy, of selfishness and crime. How can we be thankful enough that God has called us out of it, out of its vanity and affliction of spirit! And let us learn from our God compassion for poor sinners, love of our enemies, and how to return good for evil, even at the very time when they insult and outrage us, for such is the spirit of our Father who is in Heaven.

And, again, what should we be, what would the world and humanity be without Jesus Christ? Well may we be inflamed with love for Him by whom we have all things.

But it is true that amidst earth's vast desert there was one oasis where dwelt a poor and humble Virgin, in a small cottage in the mountain village of Nazareth in Galilee. She was consecrated to God and spent her life in sweet communion with Him, praying Him to speed the time of His coming. Sanctity breathes around her, her soul even in her conception was immaculate, she corresponds most faithfully to every grace. She is the greatest, the only great being on

¹ Psalm lii.

² Psalm cxviii. 64.

the face of the earth, the only bright spot on which the eye of God can rest with pleasure. How true is it that the great things of this world are little to God, and the little things of earth are great in His eyes.

Then the Almighty summons the Archangel Gabriel, and bids him go to Mary bearing the solemn commission, and to receive her assent. Let us learn how to obey, promptly, thoroughly, and cheerfully, not considering whether the order be to minister to the poor or rich, or be demeaning to our position and the like. When God's will is manifested by rightful authority we must, like the Angel, obey, *prompté, intègre, et fortiter*. Sometimes we are carried away by jealousy if others receive greater gifts and honours than we: and this perhaps happens with respect to other Religious Orders: or we bring ourselves to believe that the successes of others are a humiliation for ourselves, and are grieved at them. No! No! A thousand times no! May God be glorified, that is all, no matter when or by whom, whether by friend or foe; by those who patronize us or by our rivals.

Point 2.—The Salutation.—Let us contemplate Mary as she is in her solitary chamber absorbed in prayer, when the Angel enters and greets her by her name; then declares her "full of grace." What an honour! what the praise of all mankind together compared with what she receives from the mouth of this Archangel. When he goes on to praise her as the most blessed of all women, she became troubled and thought what this praise might mean. We, on the contrary, are troubled if men do not praise us; and flatter ourselves that their praises are only our due. What a contrast with the humility of Mary. The Angel calms her fears and announces his commission. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, . . . thou shalt call His name Jesus, . . . and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." His reign shall

never end: unlike earthly kings, whom either revolution or death draw down from the throne, *et regni eorum est finis*.

Undazzled by the proposal, she is full of thought before she speaks, and then exposes her difficulty. She has cut off her chance of being a mother by her solemn vow by which she never will and never can know man. Oh! the all but infinite love of holy purity which would make her reject the honour of being Mother even of God if it were to cost her her virginity. What a lesson for us, and how it should fill us with confusion at so often and without necessity exposing this sweet virtue to the danger of being sullied. Then the Angel replies to her difficulty: and then and not before does she assent. How often do we, when God inspires us to a sacrifice, ask "How can that be? How can we overcome this repugnance of the flesh, this or that temptation?" Let us remember the words of the Archangel, "Nothing is impossible with God," and let us trust that by our faith, like the saints, we shall conquer, and let us say with the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me,"¹ not indeed of myself, but by the grace of God with me, and this grace will never be wanting to me.

Let us make our colloquy to our Blessed Lady, to our Lord, and to the Eternal Father, and end with the "Our Father."

PART II.—THE ACCOMPLISHMENT.²

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As in the first part.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the cottage at Nazareth.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, namely, to know our Lord incarnate more clearly, that we may

¹ Philipp. iv. 13.

² "She having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou

love Him more dearly, and may follow Him more nearly, especially in His love and self-sacrifice.

Point 1.—Our Lady replies, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," &c. What a moment of suspense before she answers. As by the abuse of free-will Eve fell, so by the right use of free-will the second Eve must co-operate in our reinstatement.

What a moment for *Mary*, for, as Augustine argues, she must have been allowed in prophetic vision to see what was to be involved in her becoming the Mother of God, and the panorama of her life of sorrows must have passed before her.

What a moment of suspense for the *devils* in Hell, for it is a question of their power being broken for ever, and that by a woman. It is a question whether she is with her heel to crush the head of Lucifer! What an awful moment for *humanity*, on it depending the salvation of myriads.

A *fiat* created the world, a *fiat* created the sacramental life, a *fiat* decreed the redemption of the world.

She said, "Behold the maid-servant of the Lord, *be it done* unto me as thou hast said." Oh! the bold, brave, and humble maiden and heroine of sixteen! Oh! noble expression of sublime resignation: her mind thinks of the responsibility of her stupendous office, but not of the honour and dignity to which she was raised. In her profound humility she is aflame with Divine love. How full of confusion should we be that with all our misery we still are full of pride and vanity, and are more taken up with the thoughts of honour than of duty. Here, too, *Mary* teaches us to humble ourselves

shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. . . . And *Mary* said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. . . . And *Mary* said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." (St. Luke i. 29—38.)

under the Divine favours, and to show our gratitude to God.

Point 2.—Then the Eternal Father gave with an act of infinite love His only-begotten Son for the salvation of the world.¹ The Holy Spirit adapted the most pure breast of Mary for the dwelling-place of God, and the Word descended and assumed in it our human flesh. *Et verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.* Oh! the infinite goodness and condescension of the most august Trinity. Let us learn to return good for the evil done to us!

The angels in adoration crowded round their King, overwhelmed with amazement to see Him thus uniting under His Divine personality of the Word the two natures, the nature of God and the nature of Man, the finite with the infinite!

Here we find our King giving us an example of how we are to establish the Kingdom of His Father, by an astounding act of humility and of self-annihilation: "Emptying Himself out, taking the form of a slave, and found in the habit of a child of Adam,"² by renunciation of His own will, "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not. . . . I have willed it and Thy law in the midst of My heart,"³ "and having joy before Him He chose the Cross, despising the shame,"⁴ thus taking the offensive (*agendo contra*) against pleasure, honour, and sensual love. Oh! we have pledged ourselves to follow Him; with Peter we have engaged to go whithersoever He goes. We have made the oblation of ourselves. Alas! how often have we been guilty of rapine in the holocaust, and thus violated our engagements, failing to realize and learn the first lesson which He gives us in the Incarnation, which is self-abasement and sacrifice. Nor did He do this only once in the days of His mortality,

¹ St. John iii. 16.

² Philipp. ii. 7.

³ Hebrews x. 5.

⁴ Hebrews xii. 2.

for from the rising of the sun to its down-going the same lessons are taught us in the ever-adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and in the Holy Eucharist, in which this Mystery is continued and expanded and applied to us: *Memoriam fecit mirabilium, &c.*¹

Let us conclude with a colloquy, begging of our Lady to obtain for us a practical knowledge of these virtues of our Lord, and the grace to reduce them to practice, and say the "Hail Mary." Let us ask the same of our Lord, and say the *Anima Christi*, and finally let us humbly and earnestly beg the same from the Eternal Father, and end with the "Our Father."

THE VISITATION OF OUR LADY.²

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lady goes from Nazareth to Hebron

¹ "He hath made a memorial of His wonderful works, the merciful and gracious God, He hath given food to them that fear Him." (Psalm cx. 4.)

² "And Mary rising up in those days went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His Name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm, He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her for three months; and she returned to her own house." (St. Luke i. 39--56.)

on a visit of charity to her cousin Elizabeth. On her arrival the child whom Elizabeth was bearing leaped for joy, and the mother was filled with the Holy Ghost and exclaimed, "Blessed art thou amongst women;" to which our Lady replied in the words of the *Magnificat*. She remained with her cousin for three months until the birth of John, the Precursor of our Lord.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the way from Nazareth to Hebron, or it may be to Ain Karim; rough and uneven, over hills and through dales; also the humble, peaceful cottage of Zachary.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we desire, which here will be to know our Blessed Lord, as mirrored to us in His Mother, that with her we may ever more and more increase in love of Him.

Point 1.—When Elizabeth hears the salutation of our Lady, &c. No sooner did Mary learn by revelation that her cousin was with child, than she at once determined to go and visit her; not from any curiosity, restlessness, or desire of change, but through the spirit of charity infused into her by Him whom she had just conceived by the Holy Ghost. After spending a few days in loving communion with God and in silent contemplation of the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation, she starts on her long and dreary journey. Let us accompany her, and observe her beautiful modesty, recollection, union with her Jesus, cheerfulness, peace, and absolute trust in the providence of God. Who would think that this poor, wearied, humble girl, is no other but the Mother of God, the greatest and most exalted creature that has ever left a footprint on the earth since its first creation! The first living tabernacle of the living God, attended on her journey by hosts of blessed spirits, the object of their love and reverence! The Renowned Virgin, the Admirable Mother, the Seat of Wisdom, the future Cause of our true Joy! How

little she thinks of her fatigue, of the cold comfort and inconveniences of the stations in which she rests at night! Her love and charity make all sacrifices light and pleasant to her! "Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it: if a man should give all his substance for love, he shall despise it as nothing."¹ Oh, how many lessons have we to learn here from Mary when we have to go on journeys, lessons of modesty, humility, recollection, union with Jesus, and poverty: and above all, readiness to undergo fatigue and every inconvenience at the call of charity, especially in visiting the sick, helping others in their necessities or comforting those that are in sorrow or affliction. Let us consider how "all good things went with her."²

(a) John would at her arrival be sanctified in his mother's womb.

(β) Elizabeth would receive congratulations on her miraculous conception, and would have a humble and cheerful handmaid.

(γ) Her child would advance wonderfully in grace through the presence of Jesus during the three months of Mary's visit.

(δ) The whole family would derive great profit from the grand example of humility and charity of the Mother of God, devoting herself to the humble duties of a domestic servant, and from the presence of the Son of God.

As soon as our Lady salutes Elizabeth, saying, "Peace be unto you," Jesus likewise salutes John, purifies him from original sin, endows him with the use of reason, fills him with the Holy Spirit. John recognizes the interior voice of "the Lamb of God," and jumps for joy; Elizabeth likewise becomes inspired by the Holy Ghost, and declares the presence of the

¹ Cant. viii. 7.

² Wisdom vii. 11.

Incarnate God, and the Divine Motherhood of Mary, saying, "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;" blessed, because chosen from amongst all women to be the Mother of the world's Redeemer; blessed, because the woman foreseen, foretold, and promised to us by the prophets; blessed, because in the fruit of thy womb, all mankind shall be blessed; blessed, because of thy faith that what the Lord hath said unto thee will all come to pass. Then, conscious of her own unworthiness to receive such a grace and favour from Heaven, she makes public profession of her humility by asking "why it should so be, that the Mother of her Lord should thus honour her by coming to visit her."

Point 2.—Our Lady gives utterance to the sublime canticle. Let us listen in spirit to the outpouring of her soul by our Blessed Lady. She first ascribes all to its true source and origin, to the Author of all, to her God, who is worthy alone of all reverence and adoration; she renders to Him as the Giver of such great favours, her praises, admiration, and love, declaring herself His humble handmaid, whilst acknowledging the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God. Her spirit exults in God her Saviour, and at the same time her only Son; and this because He has, with love, and without any merit of hers, looked graciously down upon His lowly handmaid, on which account throughout all time, and in eternity, all generations will proclaim her blessed. This they will do, on account of the great things which the Almighty hath wrought in her, by the mystery of the Incarnation and her consequent Divine Motherhood: by granting her an immaculate conception, making her full of grace, preserving her virginity.

In the second part she proclaims the undying mercy of God which will never be wanting to them that love

and fear to offend Him ; but to such as think highly of themselves, whose hearts are puffed up with pride, such as the haughty Pharisees and Scribes, the persecutors of the Church, and those who reject her authority, He will manifest His terrible and avenging arm, and will drag them from their seat of power, whilst those that are lowly He will exalt. Them that hunger and thirst after justice, He will fill with good things, as we see verified in the Holy Eucharist, but the rebellious and proud shall be sent away empty.

In the third place she proclaims how God has fulfilled the promises made to the fathers of old, being mindful of His mercy, by sending down to Israel a Saviour, by whom they should be blessed, as He had promised to Abraham and his descendants.

Point 3.—Mary remained about three months, and then returned to her own house. She stayed for that length of time, that she might be a help to her cousin in the household duties, and also might be a supernatural assistance to her cousin, Zachary, and the child, through the presence of Jesus. Let us contemplate the daily life during those three months in the cottage of Zachary. Zachary deaf and dumb in consequence of the wavering of his faith at the announcement of Gabriel ; Elizabeth, humble, modest, and full of admiration, reverence, and awe, as she looked upon Mary and thought of the Child whom she was to bring forth ; Mary always studying with humility and love how to be of service to both, carrying pails of water from the well, or with active and loving devotion giving herself to the menial duties of the house, deeming the lowest offices quite consistent with her high dignity. In the school of Christ, true glory consists in love of humiliations, in the spirit of self-denial, and in devotedness to works of charity. But besides these three, there were two other dwellers in

that cottage, who, though invisible to our outward senses, were still actively engaged. Jesus the humble, loving, generous Child of Mary, far more active than His Blessed Mother, bestowing graces and blessings on John, who on his side co-operated with the graces which he received, and with profound humility and love was ever manifesting his gratitude and devotion to our Lord, and paying Him the adoration due to Him as his God. Oh, with what confusion should we not be filled, who perhaps are favoured by dwelling under the same roof with Jesus, or at least have Him dwelling in our churches, within easy distances, and yet rarely go to visit Him, although He is waiting there out of love for us, and is ever desiring us to come to Him, not for His own sake, but in order that He may confer His graces and blessings upon us. Let us bewail our want of faith, our ingratitude, and our blindness to our own interest, and resolve to amend.

In the colloquy let us address our Blessed Lady, and beg of her to bring our dear Lord also to us by interceding with Him to come and fill our minds and hearts with greater knowledge and love of Him, and say the "Hail Mary." Let us ask of our Lord as Man, to come and take His abode in our hearts, and say the *Anima Christi*. End with "Our Father."

THE NATIVITY.¹

NOTE.—Between the mystery of the Incarnation and the Nativity there is a most touching mystery, that of Jesus dwelling for nine months in the womb of Mary. It is of this that the Church reminds us in her public supplications in the litanies where we ask of God to hear us. *Per adventum tuum*—by His coming. It is a mystery full of useful lessons for us, lessons of humility, mortification, of observance of common life, of solitude and retirement.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall the history, how the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, in obedience to the edict of the Emperor Augustus, left Nazareth and repaired to Bethlehem, where, through want of a better lodging, they retired to a cave: and there the Son of God was born, and angels sang His praises.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the long, hilly road of about seventy miles, the caravansary and cave, as if we were in the company of Mary and Joseph.²

¹ "It came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. . . . And all went to be enrolled every one into his own city. And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife who was with child. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger. . . . And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will." (St. Luke ii. 1—16.)

² In this contemplation St. Ignatius adds three things not mentioned by the Evangelists: namely, that our Lady rode to Jerusalem on an ass, that she was accompanied by a servant-girl, and that St. Joseph took also an ox with them. Such was the opinion of Toletus and Salmeron and others, but Fulgentius (*De laudibus Virginis*), St. Bernard, and Nicephorus

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we *must desire*, which is to know Jesus more clearly, His poverty, obedience, humility, and opposition to the world, that we may love Him more dearly and imitate Him more nearly in these virtues.

Point 1.—Let us consider how the spirit of Jesus acted in reality upon the determination of Mary and Joseph, and how He inspired them to obey the selfish and haughty order of the pagan prince. They lived in perfect harmony, forgetful of self, thoughtful only one for the other, doing their actions, trifling in themselves, with perfect exactness as to the time and manner of performing them, and with a pure intention, and thus glorified God.

But their peace was rudely destroyed, for the Emperor, in order to flatter his pride and increase his coffers, orders a universal census, and Joseph must go up to Bethlehem. Mary goes with him. Let us admire their perfect and cheerful resignation to the holy will of God, their confidence in His Divine protection, and their ready abandonment of their little home and the scanty conveniences of their humble cottage, taking only a few swathing-bands to wrap up the Divine Infant, when born. These, and an ass for Mary to ride, were all the preparations made to receive into the world the greatest and most glorious Person that the world has ever seen, the grandest character in the world's history. Let us reflect on the fatigues and troubles of that long and rough journey, during the most bitter season of the year, especially on the hills

(i. c. 12) are of a different opinion : Suarez inclines to the former opinion. As regards the ox, Bonaventure, Lyra, and a considerable number of the Fathers are of the opinion of St. Ignatius, and incline to the idea that Joseph sold it and with the price was enabled to pay the tribute-money and the expenses of the journey to, and of the stay in, Bethlehem. Our Saint asserts nothing positively, but adds only : *Ut pie meditari licet.*

of Samaria. The only shelter at nights was that afforded by the halting-places on the way, and their food probably was most scanty. Yet they are happy, for they have Jesus with them, happy in thinking of Him and breathing holy acts of love for Him. Let us compare our mode of travelling with theirs, our recollection, humility, poverty, and union with Jesus, and how much shall we find that needs correction. Let us learn, above all, obedience, prompt and cheerful, to the orders of Superiors, to leave country, friends, and conveniences, to undertake long and painful journeys, to embrace labours and hardships, and go whithersoever we may be sent, thereby to serve the designs of God and to promote His greater glory.¹

At length they reach Bethlehem. Let us accompany Mary and Joseph through the crowded streets. In vain he passes from door to door, for there is no room for such a couple as a poor artisan and his spouse. As door after door is shut upon him, his poor heart receives a fresh wound, for he feels the cruel blow it is to Mary. There is room for his wealthier friends and relations, but none for the Son of God, none for the Queen of Heaven and earth. Learn how to value the esteem of men—blush to receive any consideration from those who treated and still treat Mary, Joseph, and Jesus so cruelly. At length, as there was no roof to shelter them, Joseph goes out of the town to a khan or enclosed court for shelter, in one corner of which was a cave dug out of the face of a rock, which was used for the housing of cattle, and into this he conducts Mary and the ass. Let us contemplate the calm and cheerful courage with which they embrace suffering, humiliation, and contempt, and how imbued they are with the spirit of Him who is about to make His appearance as the great King and Captain of the elect. If we are to be instru-

¹ Reg. 3, *Sum.*

ments for the promotion of God's glory, we must also expect contempt and contradictions from the world; we must be *content* at least, if we do not *rejoice*, in being unknown or humbled, whilst others shall be held in regard; for us the worst, for others the best will be provided—others will be promoted to important offices, while we shall be overlooked, &c.

Point 2.—Let us contemplate how, in the solemn stillness of the night, the *desired* of the *nations*—foretold for four thousand years—the *longed-for* of the Patriarchs, the Redeemer of the world, the glory of the Father, is brought into the world by His Immaculate Mother, who, after adoring Him and giving Him a mother's kiss with awful reverence, wraps Him up in poor swathing-bands and lays Him on straw in a manger, through want of a better bed. Let us adore the Eternal born in time, the Immense and Almighty in the small, helpless, trembling Child, the Impassible subject to the cold and tears and miseries of our nature, the Son of God become the son of man, that He may make mankind the sons of God. His first lesson on appearing in the world is death to sensuality, death to carnal love, death to the love of the world. He embraces poverty in effect, self-denial, and humiliation, and out of free choice He prefers them to their opposite. Oh! let us renew the offering which we have made of ourselves with all the fervour of our souls, and beg the grace to be preserved from ever showing the white feather or of being guilty of rapine in the holocaust. Let us see here too the spirit which should animate every true Religious. Of what use is it to vow *poverty*, to profess that we are poor men, and yet not to be content to feel the effects of poverty; to look for the comforts and conveniences in clothes, food, and lodging which are hardly supplied to well-to-do people in the world, and which, if we were not in Religion, we should have

looked for in vain? Or how can we hope to keep our *second vow* if, instead of embracing the hardships and mortifications of the Infant Jesus, we lead lives of ease and self-indulgence, and avoid all that is calculated to give pain, all labours and hardships. How ill does it beseem to be a tender and self-indulgent member of Him whose only bed and bedding is a hard board and a few handfuls of straw! Lastly, of what avail is it to profess *obedience*, and yet to murmur or complain when anything is enjoined us of which we do not approve or which we consider is repugnant to our feelings or demeaning to our dignity or position? Oh! as we look upon this Babe of Bethlehem what a flood of thoughts burst upon the mind! what a rush of feelings, as of many waters, force themselves into the heart! I fall down and adore. Let us see too the heartless ingratitude of the world. He has come to be a Saviour, to be poor, despised, and to die, that men may become rich, reinstated in the position from which they had fallen, and may have life more abundantly and life in glory everlasting. He comes to His own, and His own will not receive Him.¹ He is the true light to enlighten every man that cometh into the world, but men prefer to remain in darkness. Oh! let us at least pray that He will shed the full blaze of His light on us, that we may see the selfishness, heartlessness, and ingratitude of the world, so as to fly from it and break with it for ever, and that we may see His beauty, nobility, love, and devotedness towards us and may ever live in that blessed light on earth, and only change it for the never-ending light in Heaven.

Point 3.—Let us consider the third and last part of this mystery, how Jesus is scarce born when angels carried the tidings, not to the King of Judæa, to princes, or magistrates, but to poor, simple shepherds, telling

¹ St. John i. 11.

them that the Saviour of the world is born, and that the sign by which they will be able to know Him is that they shall find Him wrapt in swathing-clothes and laid in a manger. And at the same time the angelic hosts, full of exultation, sang, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will, announcing the infinite glory given to God by the infinite sacrifice and humiliation of our Blessed Lord, who is beginning the struggle in which the powers of Hell shall be overthrown, man shall be redeemed, and peace with his God shall be established.

The sign of the God-born Infant is extreme poverty, an entire absence of all human accommodation and comfort, and the presence of humiliations and sufferings.

And so must it be with us if we are to give great glory to God and to be ministers of peace to men, we must bear the sign—*hoc vobis signum*—we must bear about us the obedience of Jesus, we must espouse poverty in spirit and in effect, we must inure ourselves to pain and hardships; we must eschew an easy life, the esteem of men, all vain show of our talents and abilities. Let us at once convince ourselves practically of this truth, which in theory we have admitted and professed to believe. End with your colloquy and the "Our Father."

If time allows, the two preceding contemplations might be repeated twice over, insisting most particularly on those points which have struck us most, or in which we have experienced most consolation or desolation. And, finally, it would serve to teach us to correct any bad use of the senses and to perfect us in the right use of them, to make an application of the senses to the two mysteries before going on to, the next.

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall to mind the history: how an angel from Heaven appeared to some poor shepherds whilst they were keeping night-watch over their flocks, and announced to them the Birth of our Blessed Lord: how they hurried off at once to the outskirts of Bethlehem, where He had just been born: and how, after adoring the Divine Infant, they went back to their flocks, praising God for what they had seen.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit join the shepherds in their night-watch; then accompany them to the cave.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly what we desire, namely, that we may know our dear Lord more intimately, may love Him more ardently, may listen to His call and may respond to it with greater devotedness and generosity.

Point 1.—The Angel announces the mystery.

Whilst the Three Divine Persons were contemplating with infinite complacency the stupendous mystery

¹ "And there were in the same country shepherds, watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign to you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will. . . . And the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger. . . . And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." (St. Luke ii. 8—20.)

wrought in the cave of Bethlehem; whilst the heavenly choirs were gathered around their King and Lord in profound adoration, filled with awe and wonder at the sight of His self-annihilation, this excess of His love for mankind, they for whom He thus "empties Himself" are too busy in the pursuit of earthly things, too much absorbed in the gratification of their senses, in the indulgence of their lawless passions, to interest themselves about the greatest, the most portentous event which has occurred since the creation of the world, an event for which mankind had been looking forward, for which it had been sighing for four thousand years. The thoughts, words, and conduct of the men assembled at Bethlehem are regulated by one law, the love of self, their views extend no further than this material world and the things of time. But the poor shepherds have no hopes, no prospects of wealth, or of worldly preferment; they are strangers to earthly pleasures or sensual enjoyments; they are content to labour for their scanty pittance in their lowly and obscure calling. It is to them that the Almighty sends His Archangel to announce the good tidings that the Saviour is born. "He hath sent Me to preach good tidings to the poor."¹ Thus also is verified in their regard, what afterwards Jesus will declare, "Blessed are the poor." Let us learn here with what zeal we ought to labour for the poor, so especially dear to our Blessed Lord, and how ready we should be at all times to comfort them, to encourage them in all their sorrows, trials, and sufferings: to bring all them that labour and are heavily burdened to their Saviour, who will give peace and comfort to their souls.

But by what sign are the shepherds to recognize their Saviour? "You will find Him wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger." The signs

¹ Isaias lxi. 1; St. Luke iv. 18.

by which our Lord is to be known and the means also by which we are to find Him, are humility, poverty, at least in spirit, and mortification. He is come to establish a Kingdom whose principles are diametrically opposed to the principles of this world, which is ruled by the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. Therefore He will be placed as a sign of contradiction, and His badge will be mortification, poverty, and humiliation. So, too, must all who would find our Lord, and be associated with Him, be animated with His spirit. This the Apostle inculcates: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death."¹ Let us contemplate the poor peasants: with what readiness and joy, with what humility and simple faith, they respond to the call of Heaven; leave their flocks, and hasten to pay their homage and adoration to the newborn Saviour. Let us see their great reverence, as they fall down and adore their God; their admiration as they look upon our Lady; the awe with which their souls are filled as they relate to her the appearance of the Angel, and what he had said to them. With what interest and delight our Lady takes in every word of their simple story, and with what gentleness and respect she treats them! Let us also learn to treat with becoming respect the poor of Christ: let us be zealous in comforting and consoling them, especially by teaching them where true joy and consolation are to be found, and by trying to bring them to our Saviour by our example as well as by our words. Let us convince ourselves that it is not by the way of comforts, of

¹ Philipp. ii. 5—8.

pleasure, of honour, or of display, which leads to destruction, but by poverty, if not in effect, at least in spirit, by a hardy and self-denying life, by a life of practical humility and simple faith, that we can hope to find our dear Lord.

Point 2.—The shepherds at the cave of Bethlehem.

No sooner did the Angel disappear than the shepherds, trusting to Heaven for the protection of their flock, hastened to Bethlehem to "see this thing that had come to pass." Their souls were filled with holy joy, with unhesitating faith and confidence, and they pressed forward anxious to behold the Anointed, the Word of the Eternal Father, their Lord and Saviour. With what solemn reverence they enter the cave! With what awe and love they prostrate themselves in adoration! On the other hand, let us consider with what love the Infant Saviour welcomes them, and with infinite generosity rewards their faith and obedience, by abundant graces, enlightening their minds with knowledge and inflaming their hearts with love. When they had satisfied their devotion to the best of their power, they lost no time in returning to their charge, and on the way they spoke together of what they had seen, praising God, and all that heard wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds.¹ Oh! how sadly does our conduct contrast with that of these poor shepherds. We have this self-same Saviour lying in our tabernacles, unrecognized by the world, and "emptying Himself" under the sacramental veil, out of love for us, anxious that we should visit Him, that He may give us ever fresh proofs of His love by multiplying His graces on our minds and hearts. Alas! how seldom do we go to see Him! with what indifference and irreverence do we present ourselves before Him! with what frivolity of mind and

¹ St. Luke ii. 18.

indifference of heart! and thereby tie His hands so that He may not bless us; and instead of coming away from Him praising and thanking God, may we not fear lest we have abused grace and added to our past ingratitude!

Point 3.—The shepherds return.

Let us in spirit join the shepherds as they hurried back to resume the care of their flocks. No doubt they would willingly have remained with Jesus and Mary, in whose company they experienced intense peace, happiness, and joy: but duty compelled them to leave God for God: yet they went away glorifying Him, and loudly and eloquently did they praise Him. They had learnt by their own experience that all good things had come to them together with Him: that though most poor in earthly things, they were enriched with heavenly gifts. Well might they glorify Him who has so glorified them, and has inflamed their souls with holy love for Him, and for His holy, modest, and humble Mother. Oh! let us resolve to visit our Blessed Lord in the Holy Sacrament of Love as often as we can, but let it be with the same dispositions as those of the shepherds; with a lively faith, with profound reverence, with fervent charity. Let us be earnest and recollected in His holy presence, and remain with Him till duty calls us elsewhere; then only will we leave God for God. Then we shall be sure to imitate the shepherds, by glorifying and praising God for the graces which He will bestow upon us each time that we visit Him. It is by this means also that we shall inspire others with wonder and admiration, and so bring them to visit Jesus.

Let us end with a colloquy with our Lady and our Blessed Lord.

End with "Our Father."

THE CIRCUMCISION.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayers as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us briefly recall the history, how when Jesus was eight days old, He was subjected to the painful rite of circumcision, probably performed by St. Joseph, and how His name was then assigned to Him, after which He was handed over, all bleeding, to His Holy Mother.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the lodgings of Joseph and Mary, together with the invited guests.

Prelude 3.—We will beg earnestly to know our dear Lord, as He shows Himself to us in this mystery, that we may love Him more fondly, and thus may follow Him more closely, even unto blood, if such may be His good pleasure in our regard.

Point 1.—They circumcised the Child Jesus.

This painful ceremony was ordained by God for a two-fold purpose: first, that Abraham and his posterity might be distinguished from the pagans and all that were not of the people of God; secondly, as a sacred rite for the remission of original sin. Now as Jesus did not incur the stain of original sin, nay, being the Son of God, and conceived by the Holy Ghost, was invested with infinite sanctity, He was not subject to this legal ceremonial; yet for our sake and to set us an example, He would submit Himself unto it in a spirit of supererogation.

This He did, adds St. Thomas, in order to convince the world that He was truly Man of the race of

¹ "And after eight days were accomplished, that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel before He was conceived in the womb." (St. Luke ii. 21.)

Abraham, and also to teach us obedience, and give a sanction to the law. Further, He had come and had accepted the burden of the law, according to that of St. Paul: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son made of woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."¹ Another reason may be added, namely, that the devil, the enemy of our Lord, might not discover before the appointed time the Divine origin of Jesus.

Lastly, He voluntarily subjected Himself to it in order to teach us a lesson of humility; for whereas there was no sin in Him, who was the source of all sinlessness and sanctity, He took upon Him our iniquities, and even when only eight days old He became the great sin-offering: "Him, that knew no sin, for us hath He made sin, that we might be made the justice of God, in Him."² O my soul, let us learn from our blood-stained Infant Saviour what His love for us has cost Him; and what has been our return? How much have we done, or what sacrifices have we made, to show our gratitude? We have professed our love, but what proofs have we hitherto given of the sincerity of these professions? Let us be filled with confusion at our past ingratitude, and beg the grace to follow the example of our Lord in sacrifice of self.

Point 2.—He was called Jesus.

This name was given to Him by God Himself, as we read in St. Luke: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus,"³ for in these terms the Archangel Gabriel addressed our Blessed Lady in the mystery of the Incarnation. In similar words the heavenly messenger addressed St. Joseph: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for

¹ Galat. iv. 4, 5.

² 2 Cor. v. 21.

³ St. Luke i. 31.

that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins."¹ The reason why He is called Jesus is because He is to save His people from their sins. By sin man had forfeited all spiritual gifts and graces, which God, in first creating him, had superadded to the requirements of human nature, such as original justice and sanctifying grace, as also the preternatural gifts of immunity from sickness and death, together with freedom from concupiscence. But by sin man fell from his high estate, had forfeited his honour, had incurred the enmity of his God and Creator, and by his disobedience had lost all claim to supernatural life. Out of His infinite love and mercy the only Son of God came down from Heaven to redeem mankind and reinstate them in the position from which they had fallen through the prevarication of our first parents. He came to restore to them the rich inheritance which, as far as they were concerned, they had hopelessly lost, to re-establish them in the grace and friendship of God, their Creator and Lord, and finally to restore to them that supernatural life of which by sin they had been robbed. Thus on a three-fold title He would be our Saviour, He would be thrice a Jesus to us. To effect this He adopted our human nature, and in that nature He assumed our poverty, that thereby He might repurchase for us the incomparable treasures which we had forfeited; He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant," in order that He might reinstate us in the high and glorious dignity from which we had fallen, by making us the true sons of God, and co-heirs with Him to everlasting glory: and to restore to us our spiritual life He would voluntarily shed His Blood and die upon a cross. In all these respects He is a Jesus

¹ St. Matt. i. 20, 21.

to each of us, as far as He Himself is concerned, but He requires our co-operation, and that "we fill up what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in our flesh,"¹ by detachment from earthly goods, by contempt for the empty honour and glory of the world, in imitation of Jesus, and by a spirit of self-denial and mortification. When we see our Jesus as an Infant of eight days old, unhonoured, humble, suffering, and bleeding for us, let us again humble ourselves profoundly, and renew our promises, with His grace, to imitate Him more closely for the time to come.

Point 3.—They gave back the Child to His Mother.

This is not stated by any of the Evangelists: but our common sense dictates its truth. What must have been the feelings of that noblest, most loving of mothers when she received back in her arms her bleeding Infant! With what intense tenderness did she press Him to her breasts! Truly might she say, "My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands,"² for He was stainless as the lily, yet He is ruddy by the Blood which He has shed; His form as of Libanus, excellent as the cedars: He is all lovely: such is her beloved. On the other hand, who can conceive the immeasurable graces which Jesus poured into the soul of His loving and sorrowing Mother? Who could press a glowing fire to his breast and not feel the burning? And Mary held the Heart of Jesus to her own, that heart which glowed with an infinite love.

At the same time, her soul is wounded and filled with keen compassion at the sight of her suffering Child, anticipating what in a few weeks she will hear from the prophetic Simeon, that her soul shall be pierced through later, when not a portion, but His whole Blood shall be poured out for us. Let us also learn betimes that in embracing the call of our King

¹ Coloss. i. 24.

² Cant. v. 10.

and Captain we must make up our minds for trials and sufferings: "Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin."¹ In the colloquy let us address our Lady, begging of her to pray to our Lord that He would vouchsafe to grant us the spirit of courage and loyalty to Him under sufferings, and say the "Hail Mary." Then let us beg the same of our dear Lord, and renew the offering as in "The Kingdom of Christ." Lastly, let us ask the grace to persevere in our resolution, of our Heavenly Father, and say the *Pater noster*.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.²

NOTE.—With regard to this mystery, although its existence is a matter of faith, yet all the circumstances attending it are very uncertain. In the first place,

¹ 1 St. Peter iv. 1.

² "When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda in the days of King Herod, behold, there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to adore Him. And King Herod hearing this was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophet. . . . Then Herod privately calling the Wise Men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him. Who having heard the King, went their way; and behold the star, which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him; and opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in their sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country." (St. Matt. ii. 1—12.)

who the Magi were, whether philosophers, astrologers, or kings, is uncertain. Whether they came from Arabia Felix, or from Persia, or from different lands, is again uncertain. What was their number is likewise unknown, although the more general opinion is that there were only three. Lastly, the nature of the star is matter of dispute, as also the time of its appearance. According to some it continued visible to the Wise Men whilst they journeyed to Jerusalem, then was hidden from their view until they left that city for Bethlehem, whilst others suppose that it appeared to them only to announce the birth of our Lord, and again to point out the place in which He was born.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall to mind how the three Wise Men dwelling in Eastern lands saw as it were a brilliant star in the western heavens, and inspired by God they recognized it as the fulfilment of Balaam's prophecy regarding the birth of the Messiah; how they without delay set out on their long journey to go and pay Him homage, present gifts to Him, and adore Him; how in Jerusalem they inquired after the place of His birth, and under the guidance of the star they found Him in Bethlehem. There they presented to Him the gifts which they had brought with them: gold, frankincense, and myrrh; they adored Him, and then hastened back by another route to the country from which they had come.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit imagine the long and difficult way to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and the cottage in which the Infant Saviour was being nursed by His Blessed Mother with St. Joseph.

Prelude 3.—Let us pray that we too may imitate the zeal, courage, and self-sacrifice of the Wise Men, that with them we too may know our dear Lord and His

¹ See Suarez, *De vita Christi*, q. xxxvi, a. 1—8.

spirit more clearly, that we may thereby love Him more dearly, and may embrace His Divine call more perfectly.

Point 1.—Amongst all those millions who beheld the strange sight in the heavens, who were filled with wonder at it, and who for a time made inquiries about it, then quickly ceased to speak or think of it, there were only three who, responding to the proffered grace of God, determined to follow whither it pointed, recognizing it as the announcement of the birth of the God Saviour. They at once proceed to carry out their resolve—they leave their homes, their friends, they face the difficulties and hardships of a long and weary journey, they expose themselves to the many dangers that beset them on their way, and to the ridicule or pity of their countrymen. How often must they have been tempted to abandon their design, to regard it as a hopeless search, how often would they have been wearied and discouraged and inclined to condemn their inconsiderate undertaking? yet they persevere and, aided by the grace of Him who has called them, they faithfully and bravely resist the temptations by which they are assailed. Oh! let us admire their constancy, the cheerful resignation to their trials, and their unshaken confidence in God. In Jerusalem, they boldly inquire where the new King is to be found, they do not hesitate to proclaim the object of their coming, they wish to find Him that they may adore Him. They trample on all promptings of human respect; they care not what Herod may say or do against them, nor what his courtiers or subjects may think of them. They ask, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews: we have seen His star in the East and have come to adore Him." Why did not God cause the star again to appear to them? He would thus save them from this new trial, would prevent the alarm and indignation of

Herod, and would save the children of Bethlehem from slaughter. It was that thereby He might expose the guilty blindness and ignorance of the Jews; might force them to give testimony regarding the birthplace of the Infant Saviour, might furnish the Wise Men with an occasion of showing their faith, constancy, and courage, might expose the futility of the cunning or craftiness of the cruel tyrant, against the Lord and against His Anointed; and also make manifest the depraved and perverse disposition of the Jewish people. Let us here compare our conduct with that of these Wise Men. We admire them for the sacrifices which they made, the labours which they underwent in order to have the blessing of being with Jesus and seeing Him for a few days: what shall we say of ourselves who so often refuse to go a few steps to see Him: and when we visit Him, where is the faith, love, reverence, and humility in adoring Him, which we see in these pagan sages! How much more closely do we imitate the shameful conduct of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who in their stupid ingratitude showed no concern at the birth of their King and Saviour, and through cowardice or human respect feared to acknowledge Him.

Let us also learn to combat our predominant passion, when we see in the instance of Herod to what length and to what fearful excesses it is calculated to lead us, if it be not subdued. Dominated by an unbridled spirit of ambition to which he was a slave, he does not hesitate to imbrue his hands in the blood of innocent children, and foolishly to attempt to frustrate the designs of an all-wise and Almighty Providence. Let us learn too to repose in peace and confidence in the arms of Him who is ever watching over us, and will not permit harm to befall us unless it be for our good.

Point 2.—They adore Him and present their gifts.

Let us contemplate the Wise Men as they entered their humble dwelling. With what awe, reverence, and devotion they prostrated themselves before the Divine Infant, whom they behold so poor, lowly, and ignored by all! But with what a clear light were their souls enlightened by Him "who is the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." What a fire of love did He enkindle in their souls, and with what infinite generosity did He repay them for all the labours they had undergone, for all the sacrifices they had made in order to come and see and adore Him! Let us admire their faith, humility, love, and joy, as they silently adored Him. Then they present to Him gold in recognition of His royal sovereignty, the Lord and King of all things, they offer up frankincense in acknowledgment of His Divinity, and they give to Him myrrh in testimony of His human nature,¹ by these bearing testimony to the Divine inspiration which they had received. What offerings do we present when we go to visit Jesus? Alas! too often we go empty handed, or empty headed, being so distracted or pre-occupied as hardly to think of Him, or speak to Him at all. Henceforth, when we go into His Sacred Presence, let us humbly present to Him the gold of a heart inflamed with holy charity, the frankincense of a mind recollected in prayer and inspired with solid devotion, the myrrh of self-denial and interior mortification. Or, if we are privileged by being called to religious life, let us when we visit our dear Lord in His tabernacle renew our vow of poverty which to Jesus is more precious than gold, our vow of obedience which is more pleasant to Him than the most sweet-smelling incense, and our vow of chastity which is dearer far to Him than myrrh.

¹ These offerings were selected by Divine inspiration, to testify that in Christ was royal power, Divine majesty, and human mortality. (Glossa.)

Point 3.—They return to their country.

When they were about to return to their own country, Almighty God sends His Angel to admonish them not to pass through Jerusalem or to revisit Herod, but to go back by another way to their own country. In a spirit of simple, unquestioning faith, relying entirely on the loving providence of God, they obey. Though the way is longer, beset with difficulties and fresh dangers, they are happy to carry out the Divine will. Let us admire the great transformation effected in them; the modesty and recollection of their conduct, their peace and holy joy, their burning love of Jesus, their humility, detachment, and contempt for the world. Let us listen to their words of praise and glory to God, and let us blush to think how far we, who see Jesus so often, are from imitating their example. Oh! would to God, that each time we visit Jesus, each time we receive Him in Holy Communion, we came from it by another way, more humble, more recollected, more mortified, more detached from earth, more attached to our Jesus.

End with a triple colloquy. "Our Father."

If time and circumstances permit, it would be well to make two repetitions of the two preceding contemplations, and an application of the senses in the evening as usual.

ON THE PURIFICATION OF MARY AND PRESENTATION OF JESUS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us remember how Holy Mary, forty days after bringing forth her Son, went to the Temple, as prescribed by the Law, to be purified and to present her little Child to God. There she met with the old man Simeon, who takes the Infant in his arms and prophesies His future Passion; and with Anna, a holy old widow, who points Him out to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel, as the long-desired Messiah.

Prelude 2.—Let us visit in spirit the Temple and see what is passing.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg more intimate knowledge of our Lord and of the lessons He gives us in this mystery, that we may love Him more dearly and follow Him more closely.

Point 1.—Let us admire the wonderful spirit of *supererogation* of our Lady in going up to the Temple to be purified. "After the days of her purification, according to the Law of Moses, they carried Him to

¹ "And after the days of her purification, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord . . . and to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. And behold there was a man named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was in him. . . . And he came by the Spirit into the Temple. And when His parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the Law, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant in peace, according to Thy word; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation. . . . And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His Mother: Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted, and thy own soul a sword shall pierce." (St. Luke ii. 22—36.)

Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." But the Son of God was not, could not, be subject to this Law, being superior to the Law; but though superior by His *nature*, yet He chose to subject Himself to the Law for our example. So too was it with Mary. She had no need of purification, for her spotless virginity had incurred no blemish in bringing forth her God, and there was no stain upon her soul of original sin, from which, as faith teaches us, she was exempt. But she, like her Son, was imbued with the spirit of *supererogation*. Their example should confound our pride and teach us humility—it is a reproach to our sloth and to our excuses for evading the law, for neglecting our spiritual duties on the slightest and most frivolous pretexts. We are sinners, and yet we are ashamed to appear what we are, and postpone the application of the means of obtaining forgiveness. Jesus subjected Himself to circumcision, and Mary to purification. At the sight of this two-fold example, all our frivolous excuses for avoiding humiliations fall to the ground. Let us admire their modesty and recollection, and their happiness as Mary and Joseph are on their way of six miles to Jerusalem, because they have their Jesus with them—He is the one object of their thoughts and of their hearts. And as they enter the precincts of the Temple, what intense recollection and composure is manifested in their every movement and feature. How different from our conduct when we enter into God's holy Presence. Let us see the Mother on her knees and holding up her Child, offering it to God. What a lesson for us, with what devotion we should offer up Jesus Christ to His Eternal Father when we receive Him in Communion or hold Him up in Holy Mass. See with what humble reverence she receives the prescribed blessing, and let us learn to imitate her spirit of faith, interior recollection, fidelity to our smallest spiritual duties.

Point 2.—Simeon receives Jesus in his arms.—Long has he been waiting with unabating confidence for this blessed occasion; spending his days in the Temple in watching and prayer, just and fearing God, and looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him. With what care do we strive to acquire and preserve the grace of God? Do we love watching and prayer, do we regularly visit the temple where Jesus is ever present, that we may go and commune with Him? How do we fly from faults and negligences which expose us to the danger of forfeiting or diminishing actual graces? Do we not rather look for the consolation of pleasure, and seek our own and not the things of Jesus Christ, and thus become imbued, not with the Holy Spirit, but with the spirit of the world? Let us see with what profound faith, reverence, love, and confidence the holy man presses Jesus to his breast. Oh! what a reproach is he to our coldness, distractions, and hardness when we receive Jesus in our breast in Holy Communion or take hold of Him in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass! Simeon holds Him once, and we, oh! how often! He after that can die contented, and alas! we are far from content to die. Then he prophesies: "He is placed as a sign of contradiction." So are all those who belong to Christ; they shall all bear His livery and share His fate. So too shall His Mystical Body verify till the end, as it has done for nineteen hundred years, this prophecy of her Divine Spouse.

And Anna, though eighty-four years old, left not the Temple, but spent her nights and days in fasting and prayer, and she was pure, and mortified, and faithful in the service of God. Therefore God was pleased to reward her by the sight of our Blessed Lord. It is to such that God manifests Himself, and it is because the number of such is small that so few are allowed to see Him intimately.

Oh! how incomparably greater are the graces which we have received, and yet how tongue-tied are we in regard to God and to His interests, whereas she went about pointing Him out to all.

Point 3.—Jesus is presented to His Father.—With what thoroughness does our Blessed Lord offer up His Sacred Humanity to carry out the will of His Father. He offers up every thought of His mind, every movement of His Heart, every sense, and nerve, and action of His Body to promote that Father's glory, and to establish and extend His Kingdom. He will do it in the midst of labour, humiliation, persecution, and death itself. He will do it without respite or cessation; nay, as His years increase, so will the thoroughness and perfection of His offering become intensified. Let us reflect upon ourselves, contrast the wretched manner in which hitherto we have imitated Him in the offering we have made of ourselves. Let us be filled with confusion at the thought, and whilst giving thanks that still He has not cast us off, let us resolve to be more faithful in future.

In our colloquy let us beg of Mary to present us also to God, and to pray for us that we may keep this resolution, and say the "Hail Mary." Let us renew our offering with Jesus, and beg of Him to pray for the same graces for us, and say the *Anima Christi*, and lastly let us address the Father and say "Our Father."

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.¹

NOTE.—Though in this contemplation the *obedience* of our Blessed Lord is put strongly before us for our consideration, still, as we see from the points, the chief virtue we have to study is *resignation* to the *will* of God in the trials of this life. In this mystery we see too the first clash between our Lord and the public authority of the time and of the country in which He is born.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us reflect how Mary and Joseph at the bidding of the Angel bear the Child Jesus into Egypt and escape from the hands of Herod,² who seeks to take away His life.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the long, weary road to Egypt, and the cottage on the Nile near Heliopolis, or On, where there was a settlement of Jews.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we have at heart, namely, to know our Blessed Lord more clearly in this mystery, that we may love Him more dearly and follow Him more nearly in His obedience and cheerful resignation under the trials and persecutions of this life.

Point 1.—Let us first contemplate the Holy Family at Bethlehem. They are poor, retired, industrious, preventing each other in kind thoughts and charitable actions, and are glowing with love of the Blessed Infant: but He is a sign of contradiction, as also are

¹ "And after they were departed, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee: for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him. Who arose and took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and He was there until the death of Herod." (St. Matt. ii. 13, 14.)

² St. Matt. ii. 13, 18.

they, and "all who wish to live piously in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution."¹ The world, an enemy of peace, will not suffer the good long to enjoy it. Let us from Mary and Joseph learn that the highest sanctity consists in doing the ordinary duties of our state, but in doing them extraordinarily well. If we turn next to Jerusalem, to the palace of Herod, we find all is luxury and effeminacy, adulation and cunning, deceit, cruelty, and falsehood. Herod, himself glowing with rage, the victim of the predominant passion of worldly ambition, is planning the massacre of innocent children, encouraged by his fawning courtiers. In vain does he try to frustrate the designs of God, "for the Lord shall laugh at him,"² and, again, "the souls of the just are in the hands of God and the malice of men shall not touch them."³ We see here the folly of man to strive against the designs of God's providence; and in all our trials and persecutions let us throw ourselves entirely under the protection of Him who will not let a hair fall from our head except by His special permission.

If we return to the cottage at Bethlehem, where Mary and the Divine Infant and holy Joseph are reposing in peaceful sleep, we see how God commissions the Archangel to notify His will. "For behold the Angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in his sleep and bids him take the Child and His Mother and fly to Egypt," &c. He who is come to be the Liberator and Redeemer of the world is to fly, as if incapable to save Himself! And thus to forego an opportunity of manifesting His and His Father's power and promoting thereby His Father's glory. Again, He is to fly during the darkness of the night to Egypt—to a far-distant country—to take a journey on foot of one hundred and eighty miles, into a land most hostile to the Jews.

¹ 2 Timothy iii. 12. ² Psalm ii. 4. ³ Wisdom iii. 1; Prov. xxi. 30.

Everything combined to show the unreasonableness of such a step; and at the same time they might so easily have gone for shelter amongst their countrymen in the hilly parts of Galilee. Joseph yields to no such thoughts, but awakes Mary, who, obedient to him, at once rises, and with their Child, they start under cover of the darkness on their way. There is no murmur, no distress, but perfect and cheerful resignation to God's holy will, no shadow of anxiety or fear ruffles the peace and tranquillity of their souls. Let us learn from their example to leave ourselves in the hands of our Superiors, who are in the place of God, to dispose of us as they shall deem fit, carrying out their orders even though to human ideas they may seem to involve humiliation, heartlessness, and cruelty, and may even appear unreasonable and foolish. They do not even ask for how long they are to stay in exile, but will remain till they shall be told when they are to return. What a lesson for us if we are tempted to weary of office or place and to ask for change.

Point 2.—They proceed on their way to Egypt. Let us admire their prompt and blind obedience, notwithstanding the age of the Child, the delicacy of the Mother, the inclemency of the season, with only the few things they can scrape together, and quite ignorant of the road and of the nature of the country, or how they are to find means of support. Their only provision is the providence of God, who has given them the order. Let us go with them in spirit as they pass through Hebron and the hilly parts of Judæa to Beersheba, and onwards to Gaza, and then through the land of Goschen to the banks of the Nile. Often they hunger and thirst during the day, and at night have no roof but the vault of heaven to shelter them; always wearied and worn with their long journeys, yet the same cheerfulness, and resignation, the same

unwavering confidence in God, the same recollection and union with God in holy prayer, and adoration and love of the Divine Child. *He* offers Himself to all this suffering and joyfully accepts it for our sakes, whilst He gives graces to Mary and Joseph to enable them to bear all joyfully and thus give glory to His Father. Let us always take Jesus with us in our journeys from place to place, and He will do the same for us, no matter how hard or repugnant the trial may be to which obedience subjects us. Often what appears cruel, imprudent, and even foolish to us, is the will of God manifested by Superiors.

Point 3.—They remain in Egypt until Herod's death. The Egyptians were plunged in loathsome idolatry, and the country was a cradle of all kinds of superstitions, and a sink of corruption: but as a return for its hospitality in harbouring Him, what a spectacle it presented in the early days of the Church! Its deserts became as a beautiful garden in the sight of Heaven. Its schools became fruitful in learned and glorious saints. Let us by our prayers and good example spread seeds in the midst of our depraved and perverse generation, which when we are gone will germinate and produce similar fruits in generations not yet born.

Let us in our colloquy regret the want of resignation to the will of God in the comparative light trials which we have had to suffer and our imperfect obedience to those appointed over us. And let us beg, through the intercession of Mary and Jesus Christ, that we may perfectly conform ourselves to His example for the time to come. End with "Our Father."

Where time and circumstances allow, as when a whole month is devoted to making the Exercises,

St. Ignatius enjoins two repetitions of the two preceding exercises, and in the evening an application of the senses to the same subject.

THE RETURN FROM EGYPT.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The history is briefly this, that on the death of Herod an Angel was sent by God to St. Joseph to announce to him the fact, and also to inform him that it was the time for him to return to the land of Israel. St. Joseph at once obeyed, and set out for Judæa; but whilst on the way he receives a second intimation from Heaven, and goes to Nazareth of Galilee, where he takes up his abode.²

Prelude 2.—Let us join the Holy Family in Egypt, and in spirit accompany them on their journey to Nazareth.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, which is to know our Lord as He manifests Himself in this mystery, that thus we may through love and admiration be led to follow Him more perfectly.

Point 1.—The Angel gives his commission for the return. Herod was dead; he died as he had lived,

¹ "But when Herod was dead; behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the Child. Who arose and took the Child, and His Mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judæa in the room of Herod, his father, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth." (St. Matt. ii. 19--24.)

² How long the Holy Family remained in Egypt we do not know, as the opinions of the Fathers differ on the point. Some with Epiphanius fix the period at two years, while others, amongst whom are Ammonius, Anselm, &c., suppose it to have been seven years. Others extend the term of their exile to nine years.

steeped in iniquity. He had spilt the blood of a wife and three children, had put many others also to death, among them the Holy Innocents; by his gross immorality and profligacy, his body was reduced to a very hot-bed of most loathsome diseases, an object of disgust to himself and to all around him, and he breathed out his sinful soul in the darkness of despair, amid tortures which caused him to attempt to die by his own hand. What had pride profited him? What is the end of his ambition, his power, and thirst for glory? Of what advantage have been his excesses except to make him an object of horror to his subjects and to sink him deeper in the abyss of eternal misery? Truly, *mors peccatoris pessima*—"the death of the sinner is the very worst."¹ From this revolting sight let us turn to the humble dwelling of Joseph and Mary in Egypt. There all is peace, mutual self-sacrifice, humility, and love; all is happiness and joy, for Jesus is there, with whom is all good. The Angel awakes Joseph, the least perfect of the family, but yet the Superior of the house, and bids him to arise promptly. He obeys. He is to take "the Boy"—such are the terms in which our humble Jesus is referred to by His own minister—and "His Mother," in other words, the Queen of Heaven, the Mistress of the World, the Mother of God, "and go back to the land of Israel." At the bidding of the Angel, without further question, they carry it into execution, Mary and Jesus obeying Joseph, who in all humility and confidence accepts the message of God through the heavenly envoy. Let us learn and take to heart the lesson which is here given us of true supernatural obedience. Whether we are in Religion, and as such are bound by vow, or are in the world, we are all called upon to obey; but how few really appreciate the nature and excellence of this duty! how few who

¹ Psalm xxxiii. 22.

obey the commands of rightfully constituted authority, not for the sake of him who commands, nor because of his superior qualities, nor for the benefits accruing therefrom, nor to avoid the evils of disobedience, but solely and simply because they recognize in that authority God, whom it represents. It is this obedience which is meritorious in the sight of God, and is alone consistent with real liberty and Christian independence. What is the motive of our obedience? Do we see in the orders which we receive the expression of the will of God, or are we actuated by the less worthy motives of hope or fear of temporal advantages or evils, or obey because obey we must? Such reasons are unworthy of a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Point 2.—And rising up, they came into the land of Israel. As it was by obedience that they went to Egypt, so by obedience they departed from it. They were perfectly indifferent to all but the will of God. With them there was no question of like or dislike, of comfort or discomfort, of health or sickness, of credit or discredit, but simply of what was the will of God, of what was most for His glory and praise. So should it be with every Christian, but especially with those who are in the religious state, and most of all with those who bear the name of Jesus, and profess to glory in it. To such all countries are the same, all residences, appointments, and offices are equally agreeable, provided the constituted authority has spoken, thereby manifesting God's holy will. It is only by this complete abandonment of ourselves to Superiors that the soul secures true peace, feels assured of the protection of Divine Providence, promotes its own sanctification, and advances the greater glory of God. Let us in spirit accompany the Holy Family on their homeward journey, learning from each lessons of modesty, recol-

lection, humility, poverty, patience, charity, and cheerful resignation to the holy will of God.

Point 3.—Joseph goes to Nazareth. There is a deep meaning in the message given to St. Joseph by the Angel, when he bade him to return to the land of Israel. Naturally the Saint would conclude that he ought to go and dwell in Jerusalem, in the neighbourhood of the Temple, where the Divine Child could go and commune with His Heavenly Father. Moreover, he would wish to go thither in order to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving for the protection of Heaven during their exile in Egypt. Yet, from the fact that Archelaus, the cruel son of the dead tyrant, reigned in Judæa, and uncertain to what part of Israel to direct his steps, he has recourse to prayer that he may discover the will of God. How often do we form our judgments simply as our feelings prompt us, or on grounds suggested by our narrow and warped views, or on considerations of our creature comforts, of our advancement or other temporal and unworthy motives, without turning to God, and begging light and guidance from Him. It is precisely to guard us against this too common fault and danger that St. Ignatius proposes to us, and lays such stress upon the frequent application of the "Methods of Election." When we combine earnest prayer with the right use of the faculty of reason, God, in His merciful and loving providence, will enlighten us to see His holy will, as He did His servant, holy Joseph, of whom it is written "that he was admonished in his sleep," and retired into Galilee, where he took up his abode in the village of Nazareth. It was there that the Blessed Mother of Jesus had dwelt; it was there that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost; it was a retired and humble village, far removed from the turmoil and dissipation of the world, where for so many years our Lord was to lead a life of obscurity, of labour, and of obedience.

“Love to be unknown and to be accounted unworth,” says the author of the *Imitation*. It is the lesson he learnt from Jesus of Nazareth. Let us also try to take this lesson to heart; let us practise what we profess, and love to live a life of labour, obscurity, obedience, and prayer.

Let us end this contemplation with three colloquies to our Blessed Lady, to our dear Lord, and to our Heavenly Father. End with the “Our Father.”

THE HIDDEN LIFE.¹

NOTE.—In the preceding mysteries we have studied the more remote dispositions to promote in ourselves and others the greater glory of God. We now come to the more immediate dispositions, which consist in applying ourselves first to sanctify ourselves in our own private life. For this we must study the life which Jesus led up to the thirtieth year of His age, when He went forth to preach and to accomplish the redemption of the world. It is a mystery hidden indeed from the eyes of worldlings, but shines out with wonderful lustre to the eyes of those who know and love Him; and furnishes us with weighty and necessary practical lessons which are calculated to make us saints.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us review the history, how our Saviour, in the twelfth year of His age, returned to Nazareth and lived there in perfect obedience and subjection to Mary and Joseph; and as He advanced in age, so He ever showed greater wisdom and sanctity.

¹ “And He descended with them and came to Nazareth; and He was subject to them. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom, age, and grace before God and men.” (St. Luke ii. 51, 52.)

in works of edification of His neighbour and of glory to His Father, and His employment was that of a joiner.¹

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the house and shop, and our Lady and our Lord employed in menial and ordinary services.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg *what we desire*, namely, to know our Lord in His private life more clearly, that we may love Him more dearly, and may imitate Him in His private virtues more nearly.

Point 1.—He was *obedient*. There, day after day, at whatever hour, we see our Lord in that poor house full of respect and subjection to our Lady and St. Joseph—always at their beck and call, content with everything, serving them in everything with the most perfect obedience. Who is it who obeys? The Almighty Creator, Lord and Master, to whom all things are subject: and, as Man, full of grace and wisdom and power. To whom? To Mary, whom of His own free choice He had fixed upon to be His Mother, and to Joseph, a poor artisan, creatures drawn from nothing by Himself, and consequently infinitely inferior to Him in wisdom, power, and every other quality.

In what? And His obedience extends to the poorest and lowliest duties with alacrity and fulness of affection, and that until His thirtieth year. So the first step in the way of sanctity is perfect obedience and the total detachment from our own will and judgment, forgetting all our endowments—that we are old, or learned, or prudent—the high offices we have held; and stamping out our own opinions and judgments; and, like our Jesus, cheerfully subjecting our own opinions and ideas to those of others. How shameful it is sometimes to hear a Religious asking: “What? am I forsooth a child? or a fool? Have I not gone through such and

¹ Conf. *Summa*, p. 3. q. 7. a. 12; Toletus, in Lucam, ii. §§ 86, 88.

such studies? Have I not been in such and such offices?" And yet we profess to imitate Jesus, and especially in the matter of obedience, whose life for eighteen years is summed up in *Erat subditus illis*. Let us listen to St. Bernard: "Blush, thou proud sinner; God humbles Himself, and thou exaltest thyself." Let us resolve firmly to obey with an obedience like that which the Son of God not only showed so eminently in all His actions, but made the chief occupation of the greater part of His life; and when He left His Mother, it was only to transfer His obedience to His Heavenly Father.

Let us also contemplate St. Joseph in his workshop, clad in his poor dress, and labouring hard to earn the few necessaries required by Mary and Jesus; as also the Mother and Child, poor, but peaceful and happy: each ever ready to help and sacrifice self in favour of the others. Joseph holy because humble, Mary more holy because more humble, but Jesus the holiest of all because the most humble, and so successful in concealing His Divinity, that the most intimate of their neighbours failed to discover it. Truly He is a hidden God—and all this for so many long years. Oh, let us love to be hidden with Christ in God. Let us follow the counsel of the author of the *Imitation*, let us love to be unknown and to be counted nothing worth.

Point 2.—He advanced in wisdom, age, and grace. It was not that the *habit* of wisdom and grace increased, for these were perfect in Him from the instant of His conception, but His actions gave signs of greater wisdom, and each gave greater delight to God. His Divine Person was covered with human flesh and hidden behind the shades of His private life, as a sun behind the clouds, and only now and then and by degrees shone forth with greater splendour as His years advanced. Let us behold Him in the discharge

of His ordinary actions; in His long prayers adoring and glorifying His Eternal Father; in His talking and conversation with men; in His serving His Blessed Mother; in His taking His food and rest—let us see His modesty and exterior deportment, and His humble, thoughtful, and charitable bearing. Let us, too, desire to increase more and more in the service of God in the ordinary actions of our lives, and to aim always at what is more perfect both as to the substance and manner of performing them. Alas! how often have we falsified and reversed this saying in our lives! What efforts have we made to increase in wisdom, in our studies, perhaps, to win the applause and esteem of others; but in the meantime what wrong notions and crooked maxims have we adopted, and what little attempts have we made to please God by our virtuous deeds. Let us be confounded, repent heartily, and resolve courageously for the future.

Point 3.—Is He not a joiner? Jesus having taught us the manner of commencing spiritual life by the virtue of obedience and to pursue it with profit, teaches us the surest means of maintaining it by humility and the constant exercise of humiliations. Jesus came to perform the greatest of works, the redemption of the world; He determined for this to remain on earth for three-and-thirty years, nevertheless, thirty of these He spent in retirement, and of these eighteen in a small joiner's shop, as if He were a mere peasant, amidst the hard labours of an ordinary mechanic, as though He were a person of no learning. Therefore He had it thrown into His face: "Is He not a joiner?" How different are the judgments of God from those of men; and yet how often do we, who profess to imitate Him, prove ourselves cowards and slaves to the opinions of men. Such was the beginning of the noble achievement, such the preparation of Jesus to glorify His

Father, namely, to humble Himself and make Himself little. Wherefore we prove our folly and error in wishing to appear in public, to make a show, to occupy conspicuous offices, &c.

Let us consider also how Jesus, who had come to do such mighty work by His teaching and redemption of mankind, would spend thirty years in poverty, obscurity, and laborious employments suited only to a poor carpenter's son. This He did to convince the world of the necessity and excellence of holy humility; to encourage and console those who are forced to work; to ennoble manual labour; and, lastly, to show us that real merit does not so much depend on the nature of our occupations, as on the purity of intention and on the spirit with which we perform them.

Let us then love the interior and hidden life, and love the lowest offices and the occupations least esteemed by worldlings.

In our colloquy, let us implore of God to give us the grace to walk in the footsteps of our Blessed Lord, especially by an imitation of His obedience and humility, and by our fervour in performing the ordinary duties of our state of life. End with "Our Father."

JESUS REMAINS IN THE TEMPLE.¹

NOTE.—I. In the preamble to the consideration of the different states of life, St. Ignatius tells us that this contemplation is to prepare us for the *main* and *decisive*

¹ "And His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch. And when He was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him.

work of the second part of the Exercises. And Toletus¹ says that, according to the opinion of commentators, this mystery is the commencement of that life which Jesus was later publicly to lead as the Saviour of the world and promoter of His Father's glory. It ought, then, to dispose us to make greater and more perfect resolutions against all carnal attachments.

2. After Jesus has been presented to us at Nazareth as a model of obedience, humility, labour, and perfection in the discharge of ordinary duties, we here regard Him as the model of Christian *perfection*. Further, evangelical perfection, or the practice of the Evangelical Counsels *and the consecrating of self with our liberty and will* to the apostolic life, is one end proposed to us for our serious consideration; but yet it is not the *predominant* one, which is rather, as St. Ignatius says, *Ut perveniamus ad perfectionem in quocumque statu*, that is, to put ourselves in the disposition to acquire perfection in *any* state, and to excite our will to follow the call of God at all cost, and to adopt the means necessary to acquire that perfection.

3. Therefore the mystery is presented to us under the following three points: (1) Jesus is called by the Eternal Father to quit His Mother, to manifest Himself personally in the Temple, at the expense of great pain both to His Mother and Himself, in recognition of His Father's superior claims; (2) Jesus obeys perfectly, and in most painful circumstances caused by His poverty, detachment, &c.; (3) in the third point we are to

And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors. . . . And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. . . . And His Mother said to Him, Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them, How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (St. Luke ii. 41—50.)

¹ In Lucam, ii. § 69.

ask ourselves, What is God's call in our individual regard?

Prelude 1.—Let us consider that Jesus goes with His parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover; that when they returned, He remained without their knowledge; that having with anxiety and sorrow sought Him, they at length found Him on the third day in the midst of the doctors in the Temple; and that when His Mother asked Him why He had done so, He answered: "Why did ye seek Me? Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine the road to Jerusalem, the Temple, and our Lord and others in front of the doctors.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, namely, to know our Blessed Lord's thoroughness and generous response to the call of His Father, that we may love Him the more, and be stimulated to follow Him.

Point 1.—Jesus having attained the age at which He assumes the rights of manhood and becomes subject to the Mosaic injunctions, He starts with His parents for Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Easter by assisting at the sacrifices and other ceremonies prescribed in honour and for the worship of God. The way was long from Nazareth through Esdrælon, the valleys of Ephraim, over the hills of Samaria, and through Sichem on to Jerusalem. His age is very tender, and the way is rough and hilly, and He runs some risk of His life as Archelaus was still reigning in Jerusalem,¹ yet He reckons nothing of the trouble and fatigue and danger, preferring the reverence and fear of God to every human consideration.² Let us admire the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph with Jesus in their midst as they proceed on

¹ Toletus, § 68.

² Augustine, *De consens Evang.* ii. c. 10.

their way: their humility, modesty, gentleness—how content to be ignored and perhaps looked down upon by their fellow-pilgrims on account of their poverty and retiring manners. With what deep feelings is the Heart of Jesus swelling for His most Holy Mother, and for St. Joseph, their pure, loving, and devoted protector; and on the other side, with what ardent love, profound reverence, and awe were their hearts filled for the Divine Jesus! Again, what was their food, their accommodation, on that three-days' journey?—and yet they bear it all so cheerfully, so silently, so generously, for it is on the part of Jesus and of Mary a labour undertaken in a spirit of supererogation, as only Joseph came under the Law. How much have we to learn in all these respects, and how little of supererogation do we find in all that we do for God! During the seven days let us behold Him generally in the Temple adoring and praising God and praying for the salvation of mankind. Let us learn here to cling perseveringly to our spiritual duties, if we mean to do good to others and glorify God. All our talents, industry, and labours, will be of no use to others, if by negligence in prayer and spiritual observances we fail to sanctify ourselves. Let us learn *never* through irksomeness, small ailments, preparation of sermons or succouring our neighbours, to neglect our religious duties, especially meditation and exams of conscience and our other daily devotions.

We may also contemplate the spirit of recollection, composure, and modesty, which the Holy Family displayed during all the ceremonies of the Temple, the exactness with which they observed the minutest details of the Law, and learn a lesson of the manner in which we should conduct ourselves in the house of God, and more especially in the preparation for, celebration of, and thanksgiving after the participation of the sacraments, or Sacrifice of the Mass.

When the feast was over and the parents of Jesus in company with the other pilgrims from Galilee started for their homes, Jesus remained behind. This was an intense pain to His Sacred Heart, for He knew the dreadful pain and sorrow which it must cause to the most tender and loving heart of His Blessed Mother, yet He could not tell her, for it was by this her trial that her most pure soul was to be rendered more pure and more beautiful still, and that her natural love was to give more place to the supernatural with which she was inflamed. This His pain was intensified by the love which He had for her; but such was the will of His Eternal Father, that thereby He might teach the world that there is a higher and a nobler law than that which, as the Author of Nature, He has implanted in the soul of every man, and in compliance with which the natural law must be sacrificed. This is a lesson for parents as well as for children, that when God calls to His special service, the natural ties which bind them to each other must be broken, and the sacrifice must be made even though it may cause the heart to bleed.

Point 2.—Jesus obeys most cheerfully, and remains in the Temple, and mixing with the strangers who were receiving instructions from the doctors, listens to their teachings as if He were an ignorant scholar. We may well suppose¹ that He would ask them regarding the Messiah, thereby to draw the doctors and scribes to a knowledge of Him when He should later enter on His Public Ministry. So full of celestial wisdom were His questions and replies, that all were rapt in admiration. Let us learn with like humility, modesty, and assiduity, and with the same purity of intention, those sacred truths and sciences, which may fit us to be instruments for the promotion of God's glory and the

¹ Toletus, § 75.

salvation of souls, and may serve also to sanctify ourselves. Instead of spending our time in visits, compliments, and in worldly and unprofitable discourses, let us be covetous of it and devote it to professional study, after allowing a full measure to prayer. The doctors wondered at the heavenly prudence and wisdom manifested by Jesus. God grant that the people with whom we may be thrown, may never have cause to wonder at the imprudence, rashness, or folly of our conversation, or at our want of zeal and piety. But how was Jesus supported during those three days? Probably on charity. Where did He pass the night? Either in the porch or portico of the Temple, or He craved the hospitality of others. All the daytime He spent in the house of God, knowing "that all other things would be added unto Him."

Point 3.—When Joseph and Mary had finished the first day on their return journey to Nazareth, they found that Jesus was absent, and was not in the company of any of their relatives or friends. For this no blame could be attached to them, whether of indifference, neglect, or want of love: yet who can conceive the anguish and sorrow of Mary and Joseph, and at the same time their humble submission to the Divine will. We may apply to her in her distress those words of the spouse in the Canticles: "By night I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not. I will arise and go about the city; in the streets and the broad ways, I will seek Him whom my soul loveth. I sought Him and I found Him not. The watchmen who keep the city found me: have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?"¹ Let us accompany them on their way back to Jerusalem in search of Him: let us feel intense compassion for them, for the poor Mother in her calm but deep sorrow at the loss of her

¹ Cant. iii. 2, 3.

Child, in her terrible affliction and unmerited self-reproaches at her want of care of her Blessed Child; and for holy Joseph in his double grief at the sight of the distress of Mary and his anxiety about Jesus. Truly "great is their sorrow as is the sea. Who can heal it?" And so the slow hours of that miserable day passed. What a lesson this should be for us when through our own fault we have had the terrible misfortune to lose Jesus by a grievous sin, or have gone to a distance from Him by a deliberate venial sin. If they so sorrowed and hastened to seek for Him who without shadow of fault had been separated from Him, what ought to be our affliction, what our haste to seek Him till He is found again? When they reach the city, they make their way straight to the Temple, where they find Him seated in the midst of the doctors. Let us contemplate Him as with sublime modesty, humility, and reverence He proposes His questions regarding the Messiah, the time and the signs of His coming, and listening to their replies. Let us observe how all those about Him as well as the priests and doctors are struck with wonder and admiration at His questions and at His answers. Let us admire the self-control of the Mother, and her patience, whilst she waits for the breaking up of the meeting, and let us rejoice with her at "having found Him whom her soul loveth, whom she will now hold, and will not let Him go till she brings Him into her mother's house."¹ When Mary asks Him why He has treated them so, and tells Him how sorrowingly they have been looking for Him, He gives them to understand that in regard of His works for the glory of His Father, and in His office as the Saviour of the world, He had to obey that Father. Let us never forget this reply of our dear Lord, let us remember that we must trample underfoot all human

¹ Cant. iii. 4.

respects and all regard for flesh and blood when there is a question of God's glory and the salvation of souls; and at the call of duty we must be ready to forsake parents and family and our best and most intimate friends, even though they may be disgusted with us and made hostile to us. Our answer must be unhesitatingly: Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business? Jesus had two kinds of work. We may call them *opera sua* and *opera Patris*.¹ The *former* were such as were common and in His capacity as Man, in which He avoided all singularity, and as to these, as long as He lived, with Mary, He subjected Himself to her and depended on her beck; the *latter* were peculiar to Him in His quality as Saviour, and belonged rather to His Divinity, and as to these He depended solely on the will and pleasure of His Father, and could not in them subject Himself to the will and pleasure of any human being no matter how holy or exalted, or how closely allied to Him.² By this He teaches us that we too must make a like distinction in our own lives. Civility, good-nature, and charity, are very good and proper dispositions to win the hearts of our neighbours, and it is well in ordinary life and common matters to endeavour to please them, when neither God nor our neighbour's salvation demand otherwise; but when our own perfection, the will of God, or His glory are in question, as these are works more than human and require the special actual grace of God, we must not make them depend on human respects, but must ignore the judgments, wishes, pleasure, or displeasure of men.

¹ In the distinction of *opera sua* and *opera Patris*, we refer to those actions of our Lord which He performed as Man and in which it was the will of His Father that He should be obedient to His fellow-man, as distinguished from those which were solely and directly ordered by His Heavenly Father.

² Toletus, in Lucam ii. § 69.

Let us examine ourselves and see how far we have regulated our lives by these principles laid down by our dear Lord.

In the colloquy let us beg of Him to teach us these true principles of the apostolic life, and give us the grace to reduce them to practice in our daily lives. End with "Our Father."

INTRODUCTION OR PREFACE TO THE CONSIDERATION OF VARIOUS STATES.

I. After having meditated on the example which Christ our Lord has left us of the first state, which consists in the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, whilst He was living under the authority of Mary and Joseph; and likewise on that which He has given us of the second state, which consists in the additional observance of the Evangelical Counsels, when He remained in the Temple, leaving His Mother and His adopted father in order to devote Himself solely to the service of His Eternal Father, let us now begin to contemplate the other mysteries of His Life, in order to study and seek out in what state or kind of life His Divine Majesty may be pleased to employ us for His service, or what sacrifice He requires from us for our greater perfection in the state in which He has placed us.

Therefore, as an introduction to this subject, we shall see in our next exercise the intention, that is to say, the ways and means of Christ our Lord, and on the other hand those of the enemy of our human nature: and we shall likewise learn how we ought to dispose ourselves to acquire *perfection* in *that state* to which it may please God our Lord to *elect* us, or in which we are already fixed.

2. Suarez¹ observes: "St. Ignatius here begins to treat of the means by which a man ought gradually to dispose himself to make a right election of that state of life in which he may best secure his salvation and serve his God."

3. The meditations themselves are calculated to lead the exercitant to perfection, whatever may be his state of life, whether he be a member of the Society, or a cleric, or even a lay person living in the world, and therefore we see that St. Ignatius does not mention in them the Evangelical Counsels.

4. Where it is not a question of choosing a state of life, if the person is already fixed in one, the same exercises can and ought to be applied to the correction of some sin or inordinate state of the soul, or to find out what sacrifice God demands from him for the sanctification of his own soul or the promotion of God's greater glory; or what particular virtue he is more especially called upon to cultivate. All these are subjects upon which those who make the Spiritual Exercises at regular stated intervals are called upon to make an election: now upon one, now upon another, according to the disposition of the soul at the time of their retreat.²

ON TWO STANDARDS.³

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us put before our minds how Jesus Christ calls all men, wishing them to gather round

¹ *De Exercit.* v. c. xv. § 18.

² See Appendices I. II. III.

³ This meditation together with the "Foundation," "The Kingdom of Christ," the "Three Classes," and "Three Degrees of Humility," are the very soul of the Spiritual Exercises. Towards them the others tend, or on them depend, and consequently they must never be omitted. Two others, namely, the exercise on Sin and the contemplation on Divine Love, must also be added.

His standard, and Lucifer on the contrary strives cunningly to allure them and bring them under his galling yoke.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves a great plain about Jerusalem, where the Great Marshal (*Summus Dux generalis*), or Captain General, Christ our Lord, is stationed in the midst of His elect; and another plain near Babylon, where is Lucifer at the head of our enemies, the devils and evil-minded and depraved men.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we *earnestly desire*, namely, a clear knowledge of the wiles and deceits of the impious rebel, that we may beware of them, and a knowledge of the true life which our true and great Leader shows us, and grace to follow in His footsteps and embrace His principles.

Point 1.—Let us first take a view of the hosts marshalled near Babylon, a city in appearance grand and noble, but in reality a place of disorder, riot, and confusion; for its inhabitants are slaves of vice, and ignore God's true worship. There, seated on a chair as if in sign of majesty, is Lucifer, lording it over the sons of pride.¹ His spirit stirs up the depths of pride which absorbs all his followers, and from which spreads a pestilence of vice over all the earth. He is surrounded by flaming fires from which rise dense volumes of smoke, fit symbols of concupiscence and falsehood, of the disquiet and inconstancy of unbridled passions. All is agitation and excitement, nothing real and substantial, all is vanity and empty show and bravado, all is falsehood and mean fraud. If we could see the monster in his true colours, we should die of fright and horror—he strikes his adherents with terror and holds them in chains of slavery. And as for the good, he wants to

¹ "He beholdeth every high thing, he is king over all the children of pride." (Job xli. 25.)

drag them from the path of virtue and plunge them into vice, to drive them to despair by persecution, to terrify them by anxieties, fears, and scruples, or to bewilder and distress them by wild imaginings. His pride and envy make him mad against mankind. Let us next observe how his minions from Hell, joined by multitudes of his adherents on the earth, hustle round him, all ready to carry out the commands of their infamous head, all imbued with his impious and cruel malice, and all yearning to have a share in the ruin of poor souls. Amongst the most desperate let us see those who under the guise of men of science, of statesmen, of rulers, or of leaders of society, exercise their baneful influence. And these the archfiend despatches over the whole face of the earth; they are scattered through cities and towns and hamlets; they are mingled with the crowds which congregate in public places or in manufactories; they enter private houses, they are to be met with where men fly for solitude; in the workshop, the office, and in the school. No single child of man shall succeed in evading the assaults of these enemies, either visible or invisible, or both.

Let us listen to the *instruction* which Lucifer gives them. They are to attack by stealth and covertly, and to try to allure their victims by things in themselves indifferent, such as *riches*,¹ inspiring an undue appreciation and desire of them; then gradually to draw them on to glory in them and to vain conceit, and from this they will fall into the abyss of pride and so they will end in ruin.

Money is a necessity; it is required for hard times which may come, or they must provide for the family, or they ought to ambition an amelioration of their social position. Again, by it they will be able to do good,

¹ By riches we understand riches as taken in the meditations on the Principle or Foundation.

to gain respect and influence, and thereby promote the interests of society and even of religion.

Thus from love of money they will be lured on to love of honour and esteem, and from this it is but a step to pride, and this is the beginning of all sins.¹

If this first plan fails because the end seems hopeless or at least too remote, the second plan is to inspire their victims with an inordinate appreciation of their imaginary *intellectual powers*, and thus induce them to strain every nerve to develop these at the sacrifice of other duties of greater moment. Thereby self-confidence and obstinacy in their own opinions, no matter how shallow the foundations on which they are based; and rejection of authority and contempt for the opinions of others. By this means they will become slaves of pride and victims of destruction.

But the great majority of mankind will not be lured to ruin by either of these two wiles of the enemy of human nature, and thus he will have recourse to a more gross stratagem still; one which is more in accord with our human nature, I mean the quality of physical or *corporeal beauty*. By instilling into man and woman a great esteem and appreciation of this, and inducing them to spare no pains in enhancing it, they will most easily be lured on to take complacency in themselves and to court notice and admiration; to indulge thoughts of vanity and thus will become proud, and from pride in personal attractions the way is laid open to every degradation here, and to Hell hereafter.

Alas! with what ardour, perverseness, and craft, do they discharge their dreadful commission; like fierce lions and ravenous wolves they roam through the world

¹ "For pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end." (Ecclus. x. 15.)

and through places the most holy to prey upon souls, hiding their infernal designs until they have entrapped their victims.

Let us detest such diabolical treachery, and be filled with horror at the sight of so fearful a multitude of poor deluded souls ruined for eternity through the wretched attachments to such vile creatures, and through their self-esteem and pride. And has the devil succeeded with us in his first lie? Or do we spurn the love of money and especially of those things which money can purchase, such as things which promote self-ease, curiosities, superfluities, and the like? Have we an undue esteem of our talents and natural gifts, and to cultivate them do we forego or contract our prayers and other religious duties? Do we sit in judgment on others who differ from us and perhaps condemn them because they do not, as we judge, duly appreciate us? Finally, are we of that vast and animal class of men who try to make the most of and attach importance to personal attractions and bodily gifts, thereby to attract the notice and admiration of others? If so, why then let us take heed, for we are near our fall and we have been tampering with our enemy and the enemy of our King and Captain. From a sight so disgusting—

Point 2.—Let us turn to Jerusalem, the city of peace, and in some imaginary plain there let us look upon another Leader and another host. And as for the Leader, the Captain General of the elect, we see Him seated in lowly majesty, beautiful above all the children of men. Ingenuousness marks every feature; there is gentleness, loveliness, tenderness in every word, in every look, and action. Authority and power are His by right and in an infinite degree. He breathes an atmosphere of peace. So too all is peace and happiness and order amongst those who rally round Him, all have learned

from Him to be meek and humble of heart.¹ He is a model to them all of mortification and self-conquest and of universal detachment from earthly things, and He has inspired them all with that life which He came from Heaven to impart. He is the very Way, the very Truth, and the Life.² In Him are united all virtues. Let us see how this Lord of the universe chooses His Apostles and disciples and gives them commission to spread themselves through the whole world to teach His blessed doctrines and principles amongst all classes and conditions of men; for in His infinite goodness and mercy, and without any gain to Himself, He wishes all to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.³ He wishes to illuminate all with the light of the truth.⁴ For this too He commissions also the angels in Heaven. And all are bound together by the bonds of love to carry out His merciful and loving design, "that the world may be saved by Him." And to them He gives this commission. They are to help Him in inducing men to embrace spiritual poverty, and, if He should be pleased to choose them, also actual poverty: next to desire opprobrium and contempt, for from these two things it will follow that they will be humble. So that thus they will fly from riches, secondly, they will avoid the snares of worldly honour, and thirdly, will renounce all pride, and through their humility will acquire all other virtues.

With these weapons He will have us fight against the devil and conquer His and our enemies, lead a life like His and afterwards enter His everlasting Kingdom, and thus He will gain His end. After pondering on His invitation and remembering from whom it comes, we must of necessity conclude that these are the most

¹ "Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart; and you shall find rest to your souls." (St. Matt. xi. 29.)

² St. John viii. 12.

³ 1 Timothy ii. 4.

⁴ St. John i. 9.

proper and sure means of securing our only good. Then let us cheerfully throw ourselves at His sacred feet and earnestly entreat Him to excite our hearts to seek the greatest perfection, suitable to our vocation, an entire detachment from all earthly things, and a more ardent desire of humiliations and contempt.

Let us close with a colloquy with our Lady, beseeching her to help us to fight with constancy under the standard of her Son, and say the "Hail Mary;" secondly, with our Blessed Lord, offering Him our resolutions and begging strength to put them in execution, saying the *Anima Christi*; thirdly, with the Eternal Father, imploring Him to give us grace to know and imitate His well-beloved Son with the greatest perfection of our state. End with "Our Father."

1. As we have seen, this contemplation, as presented in the Exercises, is addressed to people in the world, particularly to such as are desirous to choose a state of life, in order that, knowing the spirit and principle which animate Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and the crooked malice and bad maxims of Lucifer, on the other, they may be the more safely directed in their election; but, as we have said, it is of equal importance to all, even those whose state of life is already fixed, whether they be in Religion or in the world, to stimulate them to acquire a greater perfection in their state by determining what fault stands most in need of correction, or what virtue they are called upon to practise. It also serves to confirm us in the state of life which we have chosen, and to stimulate us to fulfil its duties with more care, zeal, and exactness.

2. If we would compare this contemplation with that of the "Kingdom of Christ," we see how in this latter we offer ourselves to God to *bear* poverty and humiliation if it be His holy will, whereas in "Two Standards" we

beg to be received under the standard of Christ our King and Captain, provided we can bear the sufferings and humiliations of it without any sin or offence to God; and this marks great progress in our attachment to the cause of our Lord and a higher degree of perfection.

3. Again, we remark the contrast of the *titles* which St. Ignatius gives to our Blessed Lord and the *epithets* by which he stigmatizes Lucifer. Our Lord is the General-in-chief and true Leader, our God, beautiful, amiable, and lowly, the true Life; He chooses His friends, sends them forth, commending His mission to them, and the like. Whereas Lucifer is the head of our enemies, the impious head, horrible of aspect, rebukes his followers, drives them, &c. Our King and Lord chooses us and by His holy grace enables us to make right use of *our free-will*, to respond to His merciful design in combating the devil, in frustrating his impious efforts to ruin us and the rest of mankind, and thereby in promoting the cause of Jesus Christ. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain."¹ The devil is the enemy of all who have human nature; first and chiefly of our head, Jesus, and secondly, of all our race, whom he wishes to involve with himself in eternal misery: to this he is induced by his hatred of our King and Lord, and by his envy and jealousy that we are destined to possess that glory which through his impious revolt he has forfeited.

4. The Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the second part of the Exercises are drawn from this exercise, and help to the better understanding of it. St. Ignatius pictures Lucifer as seated on an elevated seat figurative of his indomitable pride, amid fire and smoke, symbolical of instability, agitation, and

¹ St. John xv. 16.

obscurity; in Babylon, expressive of disorder and confusion. In this description he represents the devil in his true colours, as we see by the marvellous manner in which he produces and fosters confusion of mind and agitation of heart not only in those who are the victims of his crafty wiles, but also in those who are the loyal followers of Jesus Christ, in their hours of desolation.¹ Were he to show himself as he really is, so "horrible and terrible" would he be that none would enlist in his service; therefore is it that he is compelled to act a perpetual lie, often transforming himself into an angel of light, though he is a liar from the beginning, and "the father of lies."²

5. We remark in this contemplation, that St. Ignatius in the first part represents the devil as con-voking countless devils under his standard, and makes no mention of men, who nevertheless are often his most active and efficient minions, whereas in the second part he tells us "to contemplate how the Lord of the universe chooses such a multitude of persons, apostles, disciples, &c., and sends them through the whole world to spread His holy doctrine amongst mankind of every state and condition," but says nothing of the angels. Various reasons may be assigned for this. First, our Lord is here considered not as God, but as He is our King and Captain, "the Leader of the elect, the Eldest of many brethren." As *Man* He leads His followers, poor, weak, humble men, despised by the world, against the combined powers of Hell: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places,"³ who encouraged by His example and supported by His help, are capable not only to resist, but to put to rout

¹ Rule 4, Discernment of Spirits.

² St. John viii. 44.

³ Ephes. vi. 12.

the whole of the infernal powers and unmask their deceits. This is a true as it is a sublime and glorious picture, and calculated to animate with great zeal and courage, those whom He may be pleased to call to a higher state of life, or to a greater perfection in the state of life in which they are actually placed.

6. Jesus Christ is appropriately called "the *supreme and true Leader*;" for He is God our Lord, constituted King by His Eternal Father, our Saviour and Shepherd, who came into this world that He might give us true life, and that very abundantly. He is represented as near Jerusalem, the city of peace, for He is the Prince of Peace, nay, He is our very peace, giving to us "peace which surpasseth all understanding."¹ He is seated in a lowly place, by which is expressed His profound humility: for though He is God, yet He humbled Himself, "emptied Himself," and bids us learn of Him that He is humble of Heart. He is beautiful beyond the children of men; "beauty is poured abroad in His lips;" gentle, lovely, and amiable; ingenuous and "full of sincerity and truth." He is disinterested and loving and devoted, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man."

7. If we compare the orders given by Lucifer with the instructions of our Lord, we observe how the former are stamped with arrogance, frenzy, hatred, and falsehood, the latter with humility, tenderness, love, and truthfulness; the former have for their object to lure souls to perdition, the latter to attract to eternal salvation, by the way of holy poverty, at least in spirit and if possible, and for God's glory in effect. This voluntary poverty for Christ's sake will produce patience under humiliations and at length love of the

¹ Philipp. iv. 7.

same. Of course to acquire love of poverty is hard, and it is harder still to attain a love of contempt and humiliation, but when acquired, we gain also humility, which preserves us in happiness and peace, for with humility will come meekness, charity, modesty, obedience, and love of Jesus Christ.

8. It is by no means to be supposed that it is proposed to us in this exercise to make our choice between the standard of Christ and that of Lucifer. There can be no question of this, as in the very beginning of the Exercises, whilst considering the "Principle or Foundation," we have resolved to break altogether with the devil and to fly from sin and all the occasions which might lead us into sin.

REPETITION OF TWO STANDARDS.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

The three preludes will be as in the last exercise, but let us, if possible, make them with greater care and diligence.

As regards the points in the two parts, they also will be the same, namely, we consider the persons, the design of each, the means employed in its attainment, and the words and instructions addressed to the followers of each; and let us note with dismay the energy of the spirit of evil and of those men and women whom he has seduced, and at the same time their success in dragging men to destruction. We must also apply this exercise to our especial state. Wherefore, if by God's grace and His sweet mercy we habitually avoid mortal sin, and strive also to avoid venial sin, our enemy will not try to ensnare us in his nets or bind us with his chains, but if he can only throw his

threads around us, he may succeed in dragging us very far and cooling our ardour in the cause of Christ.

1. He will not perhaps set before us *openly* the allurements of riches, but he will put before us a love of ease, of convenience, and comforts, and the like, in food, apparel, furniture, and lodgings. Now, on this point, all good and pious people must be on their guard; for we live in an age of great material civilization, when the zeal for comfort is carried to such lengths that, to use the language of the Sacred Text, it is harder to live in abundance than in want.

2. Again, with such persons he will not suggest the degradations of carnal pleasures, but he will propose to them to be chaste by halves, and to give more freedom to their senses—to the eyes and tongue especially. He will urge the necessity of giving some scope to curiosity which wants to see everything and read everything. Alas! how many have lost the practice of their religion, and even the faith itself, by promiscuous and imprudent reading! He will suggest affections which, beginning in the spirit, will by degrees end in the flesh; or particular friendships; or inspire a vanity in dress, in personal adornment of the hair, &c.

3. Or he may instil into us a love of independence and liberty, as it is called. This danger is the greater, as in our days the thirst for independence is felt even by little children. Nay, how often is it not declared that Jesus Christ Himself was a great preacher of independence and of democratic principles. He preached and promoted liberty it is true, but it was the liberty of the children of God, which is quite consistent with a state of dependence.

4. Lastly, he does not induce such persons to ignore in theory or altogether in practice self-denial or mortification, but leads them on trivial grounds and for slight reasons gradually to neglect their exercises of

mortification, and to seek their ease, and indulge their desires of relaxation and amusements, and, in fact, from self-love to make their lives as pleasant and agreeable as possible, and to shirk any thing or any labour which may call for any sacrifice or may involve any unpleasantness or pain.

Let us in this repetition examine ourselves, and see how far in any of these ways he has succeeded in alluring us, and let us resolve to break loose from his toils. End again by the colloquy of the preceding exercise.

We may judge of the importance which St. Ignatius attaches to this meditation, seeing that he prescribes, if time allows, that we make three repetitions of it, and that we revert to it in our minds frequently during the course of the day.

ON THREE CLASSES.

1. The object of this exercise is to probe ourselves thoroughly, to see if our will is seriously determined to embrace and reduce to practice those means which we feel must be employed if we intend to follow Jesus Christ in earnest, and to keep clear of all illusions.¹ With regard to the action of the will in the matter of election and use of the means of attaining perfection in one's state of life, it may be vitiated in *three* ways: namely, by being sluggish and ineffective; or niggardly and reluctant to embrace *all* the means necessary for an end; or weak, which causes it to give way easily and to yield in the face of difficulties.

2. St. Ignatius illustrates the three classes by taking the virtue of poverty. In further illustration we might

¹ Conf. Roothaan, nn. 64—67.

take the virtue of chastity, or charity. These would be equally effective in showing up the picture to nature, and in testing our earnestness and sincerity.

3. The Saint insinuates the essentially practical end we ought to aim at in this exercise by the words "that we may *in fact* adopt," and not merely "that we may *wish* to adopt" that which is best.

4. With a view to the *election*, for which also it is intended as an immediate preparation, it will open our eyes to see what inclination or affection we have towards any earthly things, and will cause us to detach ourselves from them, whatever they may be, and may bring our hearts to that state of perfect indifference which is a necessary disposition to make a good election, either of a state of life, if that is our object, or of a greater perfection in the state of life which we have embraced.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us, instead of the history, suppose three classes of men, each of which has acquired, not purely and solely for love of God, a thousand ducats. They all wish to save their souls and to be in peace with God our Lord by shaking off the weight and impediment to it which they experience from their affection to the money.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we are in the presence of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, with a sincere desire to know in what we can best please Him, and in what way He wishes us to serve Him.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that He will give us the grace to choose effectually that which will prove most agreeable to God and most profitable to our souls, and for this purpose we may recite the *Veni Creator*.

¹ *Direct.* xxiii. § 3; xxix. § 3.

Point 1.—The first class would like to get rid of the affection for the money, thereby to find peace in God our Lord and to save their souls, but they do not dream of giving up the money. It was honestly gained, with great labour and persevering industry: moreover, money is not a bad thing, it is a gift of God, and furnishes the means of doing good. Besides, prudence requires that we provide against hard times; and again, what would people say? &c. They resemble a *sick* man who would like to throw off an illness and to regain his health, but employs no means to do so. It is an imperfect disposition and an absurd pretence, and only merits our pity.

Of this class would be those who have embraced a regular exterior course of life through a wish to serve God and to avoid the dangers and troubles of a worldly kind of life, and from a sort of desire to imitate Jesus Christ. But they never put their hand to work, decline all real fatigue, take everything quietly and easily, shirk all difficulties and any duties for which they feel a repugnance. They say prayers only when it suits them, and as it suits them, and employ their time according to the same principle. The author of Proverbs¹ describes them well: "Desires kill the slothful, for his hands have refused to work at all," and again,² "The sluggard willeth and willeth not."

Let us look into ourselves seriously, and see whether we are attached either to any person or earthly thing, to any self-esteem, self-will, reputation, or opinion which may be the cause why after so many impulses from God, and stings of conscience, we are still not in right earnest, and are inactive and irresolute, and defer to adopt any measures to correct it. If it be so, let us blush for shame at our cowardice and insincerity, and resolve at once upon a change.

¹ Prov. xxi. 25.

² Prov. xiii. 4.

Point 2.—The second class wish to shake off all undue liking for the money, but still to retain its possession. Although they feel that the best course would be to abandon their treasure, which keeps them apart from God, they cannot bring themselves to do it, but by a sort of compromise try to bend God's will to their own. They have a real wish to rid themselves of this attachment and to practise poverty of *spirit*, but they cannot bring themselves actually to resign the possession of the money. They will go half way with God; they will give a certain amount in alms, they will contribute to works of religion or of charity, &c., but they cannot abandon their treasure altogether. But perhaps God wants it! as He did in the case of the young man in the Gospel,¹ and like him they go away sorrowful and disappointed because Jesus asks too much. Just so the patient really may wish to get cured, but yet cannot be induced to take this or that nauseous medicine, or submit to the necessary painful operation. He will submit to many disagreeables, but not to the one which is requisite for the cure. To say the least, the cure of such a one would be very doubtful, and his line of conduct is calculated only to aggravate the disease. So is it too often with those who have a strong wish to live lives of virtue, and to serve God by imitating our Blessed Lord. For this they will employ some means which suit their fancy, but not others which they dislike. They wish to reconcile the will and pleasure of God with their own, but they cannot give themselves entirely up to Him. They will labour as much as you please, but in things which they like; they will obey others, provided it be in matters conformable with their tastes and their own judgment; they will be humble, but they draw the line at humiliations and the like. They will do many

¹ St. Matt. xix. 20.

things, but because they do not do *all* that God requires of them, they live a life of wretched mediocrity and end ignobly. They do what is most, but neglect the less, and thus fail in perfection and in gaining merit. And for want of taking a little more pains and making a little more sacrifice, they render vain and useless the efforts which they make, and resign the fruits of the victories already gained over themselves and the devil, and expose themselves to grievous temptations. Let us examine and see whether we are not of this class, and reflecting on the insult we thus offer to God by endeavouring to draw His will to ours rather than submit ours to His, and on the unhappiness and reproaches of conscience which are the result of such conduct, let us pray earnestly for grace to cease to be of this class, which is pitiable for want of honesty of purpose, thoroughness, and common sense.

Point 3.—The third class desire to root out the affection for the money, so as not to have a wish either for its retention or non-retention, and will only retain it or not just as God our Lord shall let them see which is most conducive to the service and praise of His Divine Majesty. Meanwhile, they will so regard it, that they neither wish for it nor anything else except as the service of God our Lord shall dictate, and their only motive for retaining or renouncing it shall be what will be best for that service. Of this class is the patient who wishes to get well at any cost, is ready to accept any medicine, however noisome, or undergo the most painful operation; and whose cure is assured in consequence. So, too, those who have given themselves thoroughly to a life of the service of God, seek only what is His holy will, and at once proceed to carry it into execution. They do not consider what will gratify their inclinations, what self-love or self-ease, or the world would dictate; nor do they allow their natural

repugnance or natural feelings to influence them, but honestly seek to know what God desires, and cost them what it will, they at once proceed to do it. This suffices to make them cheerfully undertake any exploit. They are ready to do anything, to undertake anything which God may ask of them. Such a disposition draws down upon the soul abundance of graces, fills it with force and energy, and inspires it with solid and sometimes with sensible consolation.

Pray earnestly that God will animate you with this spirit.

A soul so disposed will beyond doubt reach the perfection of its state, for it removes all the obstacles in the way, and God works for His glory in souls of good-will, and will sustain it in its labours, and will enable it to do all things and to bear all things, not only easily, but also with joy.

Let us end with the same triple colloquy as in the preceding meditation on "Two Standards."

NOTE.—I. St. Ignatius here interposes a note that when we feel a strong aversion or repugnance as regards actual poverty, or are not indifferent as to poverty or riches, it is of great benefit for the uprooting of such an inordinate affection, to beg in our colloquies, even though it goes against the grain, that God would vouchsafe to choose us for that state of actual poverty, and to protest that we really wish and ask and implore it, provided it be to the service and praise of His Divine goodness.

This is of great importance, as we see from the manner in which the Saint frequently refers to it. And what he says with regard to riches and poverty we must also apply to any other inordinate affection. It is in this manner that we are to overcome the repugnance we may experience in adopting what we feel is

best for the soul's spiritual good, even though we interiorly feel afraid lest God will hear and grant our prayer.

Such prayer is well pleasing to Him, and is both highly meritorious and exceedingly efficacious. "Not what I wish, but what Thou wishest."¹

This is the more important as ordinarily that towards which we feel the greatest repugnance is what God seeks from us. Let us never forget that we make the Exercises for the purpose of overcoming ourselves and of destroying our inordinate affections, and to secure this result it is of great service to strive with all our strength to bend the soul to the very contrary of that to which it is perversely inclined.²

Let us also remember that Jesus Christ sums up all His moral teaching in these words: "Whosoever will follow Me, let him take up his cross and deny himself, and so let him follow Me,"³ and that proverbial sentence, "By how much thou dost violence to thyself, by so much shalt thou advance in virtue."⁴

Such are the maxims which we should have before us when we finish the exercise of the "Three Classes."

2. In the "Foundation," St. Ignatius proposes to render us indifferent, as a necessary condition for the right use of creatures, and here he insists upon this indifference as the condition for making a safe and proper election. For want of this practical indifference we see how the first and second class fail in their choice, "deflect from their principle of seeking in all things the praise, reverence, and service of God, and of solely desiring and choosing that which in practice is most conducive to the end for which they are created."

3. In the contemplation of "Two Standards" we see the wiles of Lucifer, and how he lures his victims

¹ St. Mark xiv. 36.

² Annot. xvi.

³ St. Luke ix. 23.

⁴ *Imitation*, bk. i. c. xxv.

to their destruction by inspiring undue affection for things in themselves good, or at least indifferent, whilst Jesus Christ, who is true life, would lead us to eternal life by inducing us to root out all such inordinate attachments, even though this may involve the going against all our natural inclinations. This is what St. Ignatius terms *agendo contra*. This is the grace for which we are to beg with great earnestness in our colloquy, notwithstanding the repugnance which we may feel.

4. After the two preceding contemplations, the exercitant may proceed to the important work of the Election, either of his state of life, or of the means by which he is to make himself more perfect in that state which he has already embraced. If he is under the guidance of a director, St. Ignatius, according to the 14th, 15th, and 16th Annotations, warns the latter against interfering with or perhaps destroying the action of God in the soul of him who is making the Exercises. If he be asked any questions on the matter, he is prudently to answer them; but his chief duty is to pray for the exercitant, to dispose him for the reception of God's grace, to explain to him clearly the rules and methods of election, to guard him against any errors or illusions, and keep before his mind Jesus Christ, his King and Lord; for the rest, let him leave the exercitant as far as possible to the guidance of our good God.

5. Although he who makes the Exercises is engaged in the matter of election, the regular meditations and contemplations are not to be interrupted, but during them, as well as at other times, he will revolve the subject in his mind whilst looking upon our Lord as his leader and model.

THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY.

St. Ignatius here interposes a document on three degrees of humility, to be weighed and reflected upon, as conducive to fit the soul and inspire it with a disposition to accomplish generously and joyfully whatever it may please God to demand from us.¹ This generosity of will is the more necessary, the more painful the means required to comply with the Divine vocation. And this is produced in the soul by humility, which here is taken in the sense of an acknowledgment of dependence and submission of ourselves to the will of God in all things, from a consideration of His greatness on one side and of our own littleness on the other, and a readiness to be subjected to others for God's sake.² The Angelic Doctor adds in the same place, that humility may be described as the reverence for God which impels us to contempt of self.

2. St. Ignatius lays down three degrees of this virtue. Others, *e.g.*, St. Benedict³ enumerates twelve; St. Gregory⁴ enumerates seven; but our Saint considers humility only inasmuch as it is an interior disposition of the soul, whereas the others regard it also inasmuch as it affects us in relation to external objects, circumstances, and persons.

3. The great use of this consideration is that it helps us to fathom ourselves, and to discover how we stand in regard of generosity; and in this respect it is in harmony with the two last meditations, which contain all that is necessary to prepare us for a good election,

¹ Cf. Roothaan, n. 73.

² "Humilitas autem secundum quod est specialis virtus, præcipue respicit subjectionem hominis ad Deum, propter quem etiam aliis humiliando se subjicit." (St. Thomas, 2a. 2æ. q. 161. a. i. ad. 5.)

³ *Reg.* c. 7.

⁴ 23 *Moral.* c. 4.

whether it be of a state of life or of the subject of our Particular Examination, or of the great resolution which God may be demanding from us in our present circumstances.

4. Now the *first* degree of humility does not consist in a man's never committing a mortal sin, but in the habitual disposition never to commit it, and never to enter into a deliberate consideration to do so even to gain the whole world or to avoid the greatest of all evils. This is necessary for salvation. As St. Ignatius expresses it: "For this degree, it is required that I so submit myself, that in all things I obey the law of God our Lord, so that even if they were to make me master of all things in the world, or for the sake of saving my mortal life, I would not enter into deliberation about violating any law, whether Divine or human, which binds under pain of mortal sin."

The two points on which we might be most liable to fail are, as Father Aquaviva¹ observes, chastity and charity.

May God preserve us in this degree. Without His grace we should, like St. Peter, fall; and this grace we shall secure if we studiously avoid the occasions which might expose us to danger, and are faithful in the duty of prayer. Let us often pray, *Dignare Domine die isto sine peccato nos custodire*—"Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin."

5. The *second* degree of humility, in the words of St. Ignatius, is: "When I neither wish nor am more inclined for riches rather than poverty, for honour rather than dishonour, a long life rather than a short life, as long as it is the same in respect of God's service and my soul's salvation; and further that for all things created, or even to save my life, I would never enter into serious deliberation to commit a venial sin."

¹ *Industria*, c. i.

This is more perfect, yet it does not exceed the limits of justice, and faith and right reason inculcate its necessity. This is a state without which we never can be truly happy; it moreover secures an ever-increasing purity in the soul, and draws down fresh graces upon us.

6. The *third* degree of humility is most perfect, and includes the first and second degrees. This supposes an habitual disposition of the soul in which, in order that I may become more like Christ our Lord and may more closely imitate Him, even though His glory should be the same and not enhanced thereby, I wish and *prefer* poverty with Christ poor, ignominies with Christ filled with reproaches, and to be looked upon as a fool and nothing worth for Christ's sake, who was so accounted before me, to riches, honours, or worldly estimation.¹

This contains perfect love of Christ our King, and is founded upon it, and is an outcome of the contemplations on the "Kingdom of Christ" and of "Two Standards." This is the spirit of all those who ambition to distinguish themselves in the service of our Blessed Lord.

He who has attained this degree has reached a degree of exalted sanctity far more sublime than that of ecstasies or revelations. It is reasonable, useful, and glorious to make ourselves in this way like Jesus Christ. The soul in this state has the cross in the heart, and embraces with love everything that is a cross. It rejoices in sufferings which it accepts as sent from the

¹ "Dicendum illud genus humilitatis est valde conforme modo loquendi et exemplis Sanctorum, nam conformitatem ad Christum putant esse sufficientem rationem amandi omnem abjectionem et humilitatis modum. (1 St. Peter ii. 21.) Fateor tamen ab hoc motivo nunquam esse separabilem majorem Dei gloriam et majorem fructum gratiæ ac perfectionis spiritualis, cæteris paribus; et ratio est quia in eo motivo includitur major amor et major reverentia ad Christum Dominum." (Suarez, ix. c. v. § 26.)

hands of God. If it has to use creatures which are agreeable to nature, it only uses them because God wishes it, and not to satisfy its natural inclinations.

It is a great grace to comprehend its value, the greatest grace to attain it. If as yet we cannot reach it, we should at all events be ever striving towards it, and thus we shall keep ourselves in the second degree. It is this which St. Ignatius lays down in the eleventh and twelfth Rules of the Summary of his Constitutions, as the perfection which each of his subjects is to be ever striving to attain.

7. Therefore (adds St. Ignatius) it is very useful for whosoever desires this third degree of humility to make the colloquies which are placed at the end of the "Three Classes," and to ask our Lord that He would vouchsafe to choose him for this greater and more perfect humility, the more closely to imitate Him and the better to serve Him, if it be for the same or for His greater service, and for an equal or greater praise of His Divine Majesty.

8. When once this degree is attained, we have reached the summit of the Exercises: all the rest serve to confirm and strengthen us in it. It is pre-eminently the folly of the Cross. Herein is the true service of God, our salvation, the true use of creatures, the sure way to avoid sin and to secure victory over our passions. We may say it is true wisdom,¹ and with this all good things come to us.²

¹ "Now all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands." (Wisdom vii. 11.)

² The first and second degrees are clearly the fruit of the First Week of the Exercises. For whatever proves an obstacle to my last end must be avoided at all cost; nor is there anything in creatures to which I must not be at least so far indifferent. The third absorbs all, and is the fruit of the "Kingdom of Christ" and of "Two Standards." It supposes that we strive to be through love like Jesus Christ, who through love would make Himself like us. St. Ignatius here teaches nothing but Jesus Christ and

It is well to revert to these degrees of humility frequently in this part of the Exercises.

9. St. Ignatius observes that for those who wish to extend the time for the second part of the Exercises, on the Mysteries of the Life of our Lord up to His Passion, other meditations may be added; and enumerates some, as the Visitation of our Lady, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Circumcision, and the like.

10. But he adds that the matter of the Election is to be begun at the contemplation of Jesus quitting His Mother at Nazareth and His going to the Jordan. This evidently is on the supposition of the Election being on the subject of a state of life; but, as we have said before, it applies equally to other subjects which may and ought to have a serious influence in the better ordering of our life and conduct in that state in which we are now fixed, and may promote our perfection in it.

ON THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD.¹

NOTE.—After Jesus had spent thirty years in private life and under obedience to His Mother, the time came for Him to commence His grand enterprise, namely, the public promotion of His Father's glory and the

Him crucified, in whom are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Those who are in this state—*Stulti sunt hominibus et non sapientes secundum carnem, hos elegit Deus ut confundat fortes*, &c.—they have found the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price.

¹ "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized by him. But John stayed Him, saying, I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said to him, Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus being baptized forthwith came out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (St. Matt. iii. 13—17.)

sanctification and salvation, of mankind. This He began with an action fraught with wonderful lessons for us.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us call to mind how our Lord left His Blessed Mother and His home and repaired to the Jordan, and was pleased to be baptized by John; and how the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven proclaimed Him to be the beloved Son of God in whom He was well pleased.

Prelude 2.—We may in imagination station ourselves amidst the crowd on the banks of the Jordan.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly of the Holy Spirit to enlighten us that we may know our Blessed Lord, as revealed to us in this mystery, more clearly, that we may love Him more dearly, and may imitate Him more perfectly, especially in His detachment, humility, and courage.

Point 1.—Let us try to fathom the intense depth of conflicting feelings which surged in the hearts of Mary and Jesus when they had to part. He had lived so long and so happily, although in poverty and labour, with such a Mother, and now He must leave her a widow and alone, to do His Father's will. He is to go forth from His little sheltered haven and launch out upon the open and troubled sea of life, a solitary among strangers, and no man to sympathize with Him. And as to the Mother, she must approve of His going. The light of her eyes, the breath of her mouth is departing: and on such an awful enterprise; and she cannot go with Him to help and comfort Him. Surely the prophecy of holy Simeon is beginning its fulfilment. They are acceptable unto God and therefore they must suffer, and bravely, generously, and cheerfully they welcome the sacrifice. Let us learn once for all that to fit our-

selves to do God's will and promote His glory we must be ready to quit all things, and to do violence to those natural affections which even may be good and holy, and which the Author of our nature has implanted in us. Further, to carry out God's will and to merit His grace, which is necessary to enable us to do so, we must make a perfect sacrifice of our own inclinations, of our likes and dislikes, with generosity and courage. Let us learn also another lesson from our Blessed Lord, namely, to be content to be ignored, to be a solitary in the midst of a community, to see others receiving sympathy and consideration while we are left friendless and alone. Life in the service of God is not a play-time; it is indeed a time of real and solid happiness, but it is a serious time and full of suffering and of sacrifice; and amongst its greatest trials is that of feeling oneself left alone and unheeded and uncared for.

Point 2.—Let us contemplate our Lord in the midst of the crowd of publicans, soldiers, and sinners of every kind. "The Lord comes to be baptized with servants, the universal Judge with criminals."¹ He comes to be baptized, thereby leading men to suppose Him guilty of actual and personal sins, and therefore He submits to a ceremony which implied a protestation of sorrow and repentance. But why? To set us an example of heroic humility,² and as He began His mortal life, so will He begin His Public Ministry with an astounding act of humility, not only by hiding the perfections which were in Him, but by assuming the semblance of faults that in Him were not. Oh! let us look into ourselves and see with sorrow what a contrast we present. We hide and conceal the defects which are in us, we wear the appearance of virtue and of qualities which we do not really possess. We are disappointed if we find that

¹ Chrysostom, Hom. 12.

² Augustine, l. v. *De Bapt.* c. ix.; Toletus, § 45.

men do not appreciate us, and are miserable if they seem to blame or disregard us. And all this though we have professed to follow our Lord and have offered ourselves for suffering and humiliation.

Let us see how John, because of his cleanness of heart, is blessed with a clear recognition of our Lord and demurs to baptize Him until He orders it, thereby "to fulfil all justice." But what law of justice obliges it? He is innocence itself, He is the Immaculate Lamb that is to take away the sins of the whole world. This law is the will of His Father, who would have Him first appear as a sinner, as the refuse of men, whom in the very act of its fulfilment He resolves to declare the Redeemer of the world and Son of God.

Sine modo. Now we must begin with humiliations; exaltation and glory will come later. Let us at last be convinced that the exaltation of the Divine Majesty through our means must begin from our abasement. We profess our desire to give glory to God and to sanctify our own souls, let us begin by washing away all pride, ambition, and desire of worldly esteem. When we have done this, we may judge that we are in earnest in following in the footsteps of Christ. Let us say to our Lord, we have a baptism wherewith to be baptized, a baptism of humiliations and self-conquest, and we are in sore straits until it be accomplished, for corrupt nature rebels against it, fear and repugnance would try to make us fly from it; but do Thou, O Lord, strengthen us and give us courage by granting us true humility, by weaning our hearts from honour and esteem, that so we may be Thy true followers.

Point 3.—When our Lord was baptized and was in prayer, offering Himself up to His Eternal Father, behold how in the presence of all the people, the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost in the visible form of a dove alighted upon Him, and in a loud voice from above

was heard to say : " This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He is the Infinite Wisdom, given to the world as Master, to teach us a new and heavenly doctrine. He is the Son of the Eternal God, the dearly Beloved, through whom alone all others are to be loved, by whom and through whom alone all men can hope to please God, by an imitation of His virtues and conforming themselves to His likeness. Let us then, from henceforth, set our Lord before ourselves as our Master, Teacher, and Model, and resolve to lead a life quite conformable to His, and regulate and order our conduct according to His maxims. It is the only and the sure way to please God, promote His glory, and sanctify our own souls.

Let us kindle such desires in ourselves, and repeat the three colloquies of the foregoing meditation.

St. Ignatius bids us, if time allows, to make three repetitions of this meditation, and also to end with an application of the senses.

ON ELECTION.¹

NOTE.—This part of the Exercises recommends itself not only because it has been approved by the Holy See, but because the rules here laid down are replete with sound sense, are full of the highest wisdom which comes from above, and of irresistible logic; they are short, simple, clear, and at the same time so large in their power of application as to embrace every state of life. In fact there is no state of life, no condition in any state, to which the principles which they involve cannot be applied, and in which they do not suffice.

Prelude to the making of Election.—The principle by which we must be guided in any election which we may be called upon to make, is that on our part we must have the simple intention of fulfilling the end of our creation, namely, the service and praise of God and the salvation of our soul. This, and this alone, is the end to be kept in view. Consequently my choice must be directed to this that it may help me to attain that end: so that I must never subordinate the end to my choice, but my choice to the end: and not imitate

¹ If we have seriously meditated on "Two Standards," "Three Classes," and have pondered on the "Three Degrees of Humility," we must have come to one conclusion, and that is, that we must all turn our election to the matter of poverty and humiliations, whether we be already in Religion or in the world. For these are the characteristics of the spirit of Christ, which all men are called upon to copy, though of course not all in the same way, nor all in the same degree of perfection. If the matter of election, as will generally happen, is not the determining of a state of life, but the correction of a fault, as moroseness, self-will, self-conceit, uncharitableness, &c., or the acquisition of some virtue, as charity, self-denial, humility, &c., our end will and must be attained in this spirit of the third degree of humility, out of respect and love for Jesus Christ and an ardent desire of being more and more like Him, independent of all other considerations.

those who enter first upon a state of life, and then consider how in that state they may manage to secure God's glory and save their souls; nor should anything induce me to adopt or reject any means except inasmuch as they bear upon the service and praise of God our Lord and my eternal salvation. Against this there are three impediments.

One is from without and springs from the devil, though not unfrequently it is put down to Jesus Christ. In order to protect us against this, St. Ignatius places before us in "Two Standards" the characters, designs, and principles of Jesus Christ and of the evil spirit.

Another impediment in the way of a good election arises from within and consists in repugnance, delusion, or irresolution of our will: and to overcome this and to enlighten and move it, the consideration of the "Three Classes" is of great effect. The third impediment lies in the thing itself which is the subject of election, when we deem it to be in conformity with the teaching of our Lord, and in reality it is not so. This mistake may arise either from our passions being interested, or from an easy misapprehension, or from fancying an impulse of nature to be the effect of grace. To prevent this we consider the "Three Degrees of Humility."

As regards the *objects* on which an election can be made: (α) In the first place they must either be good in themselves, or indifferent, and conformed to the spirit of the Catholic Church: if opposed to that spirit, or in themselves or relatively bad, there can be no choice. (β) Now of these things subject to election some are mutable, as benefices, others are immutable, as marriage, or priesthood. (γ) If one has entered into a state which is immutable, if it was done from improper motives and under the influence of inordinate affections, he must repent and try to lead a good life in that state into which he has entered, not by a Divine voca-

tion, but by a bad election. Let him follow the counsels of the Apostle.¹ (8) If one has made a right election, and has not allowed himself to be swayed by carnal and worldly considerations, there is no occasion why he should proceed to another election of a state of life, unless it be by way of confirming himself in his present state, but let him make an election how he may render himself more perfect in that in which he is placed.

Observe, however, that if there was any fault in such election, he should remedy the fault or defect, whereby he will please God our Lord and will draw down great graces.

As to *times* or *ways* of finding out God's will :

The *first* is most rare, as when God so moves and draws the will that the person neither doubts nor can doubt about following what is pointed out to him, as in the case of St. Paul.

The *second* is by consolations and desolations: In this the person considering his choice should observe what motions and sentiments he feels, without making use of reasons and discourse with himself, but waiting the voice and inspiration of God, humbly asking it with full resignation to the Divine will and a real desire to know it.² This done, let him observe on what side he finds spiritual comfort with a certain peace of mind, enlargement of heart, and confidence in God; and on what side he experiences desolation, aridity, and trouble. If in the time of consolation and fervour he feels inclined to one side and in time of desolation to the other, he must judge accordingly; knowing that God speaks to the soul with spiritual delight and comfort, whereas the devil perplexes and disturbs it.³

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 13; xiv. 40.

² *Direct.* xxx. §§ 5, 6.

³ *Ibid.* xxvii. §§ 2—6.

This process should be repeated from time to time and not merely made once.¹

The *third* time, which is more common and sure, is one in which the understanding is primarily employed. In it we sift the matter well before God, and thus endeavour to move and draw the will to choose what is most for His glory and our salvation.² To undertake this method we must be in a state of practical indifference, and must choose a time when the mind is quiet and easy and free from all disturbance, trouble, and agitation.³ Then placing ourselves in the presence of God, and with our end in full view, we propose to ourselves the subject-matter of our deliberation, examine the one and the other side, consider the advantages or disadvantages as regards our last end accruing therefrom, and after mature reflection, choose what seems the most available for the same. But as to the advantages and disadvantages, they must be considered not from a worldly point of view or according to the dictates of the passions, but from a spiritual point of view and the teachings of faith.⁴

This is certainly, as I have said, the surest and safest method, and may be used with advantage even after the *first* and *second*. For if the impulses and feelings are really from God, they will certainly stand the test and examination of the third. If in this third manner something not good should be discovered, it would be a sign that the impulses and feelings experienced in the other times were not from God, but from the spirit of darkness who hates the light.⁵

With regard to the practical method of applying this third time or manner, St. Ignatius furnishes two forms. The first is by way of a meditation.

¹ *Direct.* xxvii. §§ 6, 7. ² *Ibid.* xxvi. 3. ³ *Ibid.* xxviii. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.* xxxi. § 3. ⁵ *Ibid.* xxviii. §§ 6, 9.

Prelude 1.—We call to mind the subject to be chosen or not, together with its attendant circumstances and obligations.

Prelude 2.—We place ourselves in face of God, in a state of practical indifference, having our mind fixed on our last end.

Prelude 3.—We beg of God to enlighten our mind and inflame our will to see and embrace that which is most for His glory and our salvation in this affair.

Point 1.—Let us weigh the advantages, conveniences, and other points in favour of the thing in question; and on the other hand the disadvantages, inconveniences and other difficulties that make against it.

Point 2.—We must then ponder on the reasons for and against, weighing them in the balances of reason and of holy faith; and seeing which prevail, conclude accordingly.

Point 3.—This done we will offer up our conclusion to God in holy prayer, and if He pleases to give us comfort, fervour, and peace of mind, or other signs of His approbation, we will finish, asking the grace which is necessary to put our resolution into execution.¹

This form we should employ on several occasions to confirm and strengthen ourselves in our election.

The second form or method consists of four questions.

1. To ask seriously of ourselves if the inclination and affection which we experience towards our choice really proceeds solely from the love of God and the desire of salvation? Or whether we are moved by considerations of worldly distinction, or of the desires of friends and relatives, or of our own ease or comfort. If it is a question of entering into the ecclesiastical state, are we moved to embrace it because we like preaching or teaching, or because we shall occupy a

¹ *Direct.* xxxii.

better position, or because our parents wish it? If it be about entering Religion, do we allow ourselves to reject it on account of natural repugnance to poverty and obedience, or some other of its duties, as fastings, corporal austerities? &c.

4. What advice I should give to one in whose eternal welfare I was most interested in regard to the matter in question?

3. If I were on the point of death, what choice should I have wished to make, and on which choice should I feel the most comfort and security?

4. When I shall be summoned before the dread tribunal of God to be judged, what shall I have wished to have done? this or that? And of which shall I be able to give a better account to God?

By the light of these reflections I must choose, and, then, recommending it to God, conclude as in the foregoing method.

If from time to time we were to apply one or other of these latter methods of election to subjects which require consideration, or in which our manner of treating with others is of consequence, we should be spared many real causes of regret, and should avoid the evils which arise from acting through impulse or from mere natural motives.

Again, we should then remove any causes of self-reproach, of culpable imprudence, and of blame, for having acted less well. Moreover, by acting thus supernaturally and to the best of our ability, whether our choice ended in success or in failure, our merit in the sight of God would be equally great. How many imprudent speeches, unkind words and actions, and consequent heart-burnings and uncharitable and bitter resentments would by this simple means be prevented. It is from neglect of this practice that too often those

in authority, instead of promoting the happiness and winning the confidence of their subjects, prove signal failures in government, alienate their dependents, and fail to win their respect, without which neither peace nor real happiness nor order can be expected to exist.

ON REFORMATION OF LIFE.

In case that one is already in a state of life which is fixed and unchangeable, or does not feel any special call to change his state of life, although by its nature it is capable of it, it is very useful to consider if any change is advisable by way of amending or reforming his ordinary manner of life, whether as regards the use of creatures, or the manner of exercising authority, or as to the example he gives both in his words and actions, or as to how far he directs all things to the greater praise and glory of God our Lord. Let such a one remember that he will make progress and advance in spiritual life just in proportion as he quits himself of self-love, of self-will, and of his own comfort. On the strength of this observation of St. Ignatius, we may make a meditation on reformation of life.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us with lively faith and great confidence place ourselves in the presence of Jesus Christ and His saints.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg what we want, which is to know and fulfil the will of God in regard of our life and conduct.

Point 1.—Let us recall the *various lights* which we have received during our retreat, let us ponder the good desires already conceived. Let us exercise

ourselves above all on some particular virtue, or on rooting out some particular vice or fault. Let us be persuaded that God asks nothing from us which is not for our own welfare, and which will not even conduce to our happiness. And the more our sacrifice may cost us, let us persist the longer and more earnestly in our prayer that He will grant us the grace to make it.

Point 2.—We may examine also what grace, either for the present or the future, we most desire to obtain, that is, some grace directly tending to our perfection and sanctification in our present state of life.

Point 3.—We must also consider what thing may hinder us from giving God what He asks, or from receiving what we desire, and generously make a renunciation of it.

Let us offer ourselves to God for the accomplishment of His holy will *generously* and with a great heart: by which we shall most assuredly procure His greater glory, our own sanctification here, and eternal salvation hereafter.

NOTE.—It may be well to observe that in this part of the Exercises those who annually make a retreat should employ themselves seriously during two days in this method of election for the reformation of their lives, either by the correction of some fault, or the acquisition of some virtue, and thereby making a fresh step forward towards the perfection of their state of life.

RULES FOR DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

WHICH ARE MORE ADAPTED FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN THE SECOND PART OF THE EXERCISES. THEY ARE OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE FOR PERSONS WHO ARE AIMING AT PERFECTION IN THEIR STATE, TO ENABLE THEM MORE EASILY TO RECOGNIZE THE WILES OF SATAN, AND SO THE BETTER TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST THEM. MOREOVER, THEY HELP US ALSO TO DISTINGUISH THE CALL OF GOD FROM OUR OWN NATURAL INCLINATIONS, AND FURNISH US WITH SAFEGUARDS IN THE IMPORTANT MATTER OF ELECTION.

THEY ARE ALSO OF GREAT USE TO US IN GUIDING AND DIRECTING OTHERS WHO ARE DESIROUS TO MAKE PROGRESS IN PERFECTION AND COME TO ASK OUR ADVICE IN MATTERS AT ONCE SUBLIME AND OFTEN DELICATE AND DANGEROUS.¹

Rule 1.—"It is peculiar to God and His angels to impart true joy and spiritual gladness in their inward motions or inspirations, removing sadness and disturbance of mind caused by the enemy of human nature, who aims at destroying such joy and spiritual consolation by means of specious reasonings, sophistry, and fallacies." These consolations are of three kinds: some affecting only the senses; others influencing the mind alone; whilst others again partake of the nature of both, when the affection of the mind extends its influence on the senses. Of these the one least liable to deception or perversion is internal consolation. The first, which affects the senses and which is often granted to those who are only entering into the service of God, is useful indeed to him who receives it, but of itself it

¹ Annotation ix.

neither is a sign of holiness nor does it promote it: nay, they who experience it must be on their guard lest the devil perverts it to their spiritual ruin by luring them into extravagances. The surest sign of the Divine action in the souls of those who are in earnest in the service of God is *peace*, which our Lord brought into the world and which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit: consequently in such souls whatever destroys or disturbs that peace is not from God, but from our enemy, "the father of lies, and the murderer from the beginning."¹ To effect this he makes use of specious or *apparent reasons*, as with St. Ignatius, by proposing doubts regarding his confessions, with St. Alphonsus regarding God's goodness and the loss of souls, with St. Catharine about her temptations, &c.; of *sophistries*, as with those who are aiming at great purity of conscience, by inducing them to scrutinize every thought, word, or action, thereby to plunge them into an abyss of anxiety; of *perpetual fallacies*, by instilling false consolation, or suggesting illusions tending to draw his victims into extravagant and extraordinary ways, as we read in the case of St. Theresa and St. Catharine and others. Such illusions not unfrequently, as ecstasies, apparitions, voices, and the like, are the production of a heated brain, of a weak mind, of a lively imagination, or of a strained nervous system, or finally, of the devil, who has the power of acting on the senses so as to affect the imagination and thereby solicit the mind and will to evil.

Rule 2.—"It belongs to God our Lord alone to grant consolation to the soul without any preceding cause, to excite motions in it, attracting it entirely to the love of His Divine Majesty. I say without cause, that is, without any previous perception or knowledge of any object from which such consolation might arise by any act of its own of the understanding or will."

¹ St. John viii. 44.

Rule 3.—"With precedent cause it is possible for the good or bad spirit to give consolation, but with opposite intentions: the good spirit in order to induce the soul to make progress and advance from good to better; the bad spirit, with the intention of causing the soul to yield to his wicked and malicious designs."

It is certain that God has conferred on the angels power to move and influence mankind; but to none has He granted the faculty of entering freely the soul and illuminating or moving it directly and immediately; this He reserves to Himself. To them He only concedes the power of influencing the will by presenting an object to it, by stimulating the passions, or by suggestion.¹

Again, the *good spirit* prompts us to those things which are contrary to our depraved nature, sweetly draws us from that which is less good or imperfect to that which is better, excites us to strive after our own sanctification before devoting ourselves to the sanctification of others, to practise the virtues of our state of life, to show ourselves obedient to those in authority. On the other hand, the *enemy* of our human nature would incite us to indulge in all that flatters our senses, self-love, vanity, and love of notoriety, to attach too much importance to consolation, thereby causing us disappointment and dejection, to give ourselves to external things that may be seen by men to the detriment of our own sanctification and progress in virtue, to make us discontented with our lot or office or even state of life, to make us self-willed or self-opiniated, &c.

Whilst the *good spirit* draws us sweetly to the practice of every virtue and to the carrying out of the Divine will, and moves us to follow in the footsteps of the humble and patient Son of Mary, the devil strives to seduce us from the path of solid virtue, to call in

¹ St. Augustine, Serm. xviii. on Psalm cxviii.

question practically at least the doctrine and example of our Blessed Lord and to substitute for simplicity and ingenuousness a hypocritical or political mode of action.

Rule 4.—"It is peculiar to the evil spirit to enter with a devout soul and to come out his own way, assuming the form of an angel of light; that is to say, to begin by suggesting good thoughts in conformity with the disposition of the just soul, and gradually to endeavour to draw it into his secret snares and to instil perverse intentions, thereby to gain his wicked end."

Thus when one is taking special pains to acquire any virtue, or to root out any defect, the devil tries to drive him into extremes, or by some other artifice to vex, harass, and ruin the soul, as, for example, by driving zeal to indiscretion, devotion to excess, mortification to the ruin of health, &c. In this way also he has succeeded in establishing many heresies, in producing insanity from scruples, in causing loss of vocations. The great and surest safeguard against all such attempts are humility and simple obedience.

Rule 5.—"We must carefully examine such thoughts. If we find their beginning, progress, and end are good, and leading solely to what is good, we may conclude that they come from our good Angel: but if the thoughts terminate in, or tend to evil or to a lesser good, or if they weaken, disturb, or disquiet the soul, it is a clear sign that they proceed from the bad angel, the enemy of our eternal salvation."

We must observe that the wiles of the evil spirit are to be detected either in the process of the thought or suggestion or in its end. St. Ignatius supplies us with certain signs to aid us in detecting the evil source, such as the following:

(a) If the process ends in something evil or less good.

(β) If it ends in diverting from good, as from prayer, self-denial, &c.

(γ) If it leads to some lesser good, or to the weakening of the soul.

(δ) If it tends to disturb the soul and destroys its peace.

Rule 6.—"When the enemy has been discovered, it is profitable for him who has been so tempted, to examine the process of the good thought suggested to him, and its beginning, and to observe how the devil gradually contrived to rob him of his state of sweetness and peace until he led him to his own depraved purpose, in order that he may be on his guard against such deceits for the future."

Rule 7.—"In those who are going forward in virtue, the good spirit touches the soul gently and sweetly, like drops of water entering a sponge; the evil spirit with noise and rudely, as water falling on a stone. In those who are going from good to bad, or from bad to worse, it happens contrariwise," &c. The reason for this is clear.

Rule 8.—"When there is consolation without preceding cause, inasmuch as it proceeds solely from God our Lord, nevertheless the person to whom it is given ought to examine carefully and to distinguish the exact period of the consolation from that which follows it, in which the soul continues in its fervour; for in this second period it often happens that it makes plans and resolutions which are not inspired by God our Lord; and hence they should be well examined before they are carried into effect."¹

1. It is certain that some inspirations and inward motions are caused in the soul *immediately* by God, the Author and Master of His graces, without the help or

¹ Comp. Gagliardi, *De Reg. Discr. Spirit.*

ministry of any other cause.¹ Whereas any other spirit, whether good or bad, cannot *by itself* immediately move our understanding or will; but only by means of phantasms and sensible or imaginary objects.

St. Ignatius in his second Rule observes that it is God alone who is the Master of the human soul, who can produce consolation without any preceding cause, that is, without any thing, calculated to cause them, having affected either the senses, or the understanding, or will.² Such kind of inspirations, which almost instantaneously inflame the will and light up the understanding, though sometimes peculiar to persons advanced in virtue, are nevertheless extraordinary and very rare, and should not be looked for or easily supposed. For this reason, in the eighth Rule, the Saint with great prudence advises us that, although we think that the instinct or consolation which we feel proceeds immediately from God, we must premise a diligent examination before we give our approbation, because it is hard to discern whether it has come from God or from ourselves, and because, though the instinct or consolation from God preceded, yet there might immediately supervene something arising from our own will and judgment or from the instigation of the devil.³ Hence we may infer that it is very dangerous for a soul to regulate herself in her deliberations only by these motions of the will and interior instincts without

¹ S. Thomas docet (3. q. viii. ad. 1.): "Solum Deum posse influere interius rationali menti." (q. lxiv. a. 1.) "Solum Deum posse illabi animæ." Suarez (tr. x. bk. ix. c. 5. § 31.): "Certum est dari in anima nostra internos quosdam motus tam intellectus quam voluntatis." (Conf. Trid. sess. vi.; Psalm cxviii.) "Item certum est has inspirationes vel illuminationes interdum fieri immediate ab ipso Deo . . . interdum vero et sæpe fiunt per bonos Angelos custodes. E contrario certum est dæmones conari ad imitandum hanc internam motionem convertendo illam in malum," &c.

² Suarez, bk. ix. §§ 39, 40.

³ *Summa*, 2a. 2æ. q. 171. a. 5.

employing due examination and considerations based upon reason.¹

As to the more common inspirations and feelings, which are preceded by some connatural and proportionate cause, they may arise from either the good or the bad spirit, as St. Ignatius says in the third Rule;² but we may form a prudent conjecture of their cause from three things:

(*a*) From the *matter*, as in Rule 4. For if the impulse is towards something sinful or conducive to sin, it must come from the evil spirit; but if it be towards something good we must consider it with caution; for the evil spirit sometimes foments good desires thereby to ensnare us, and so to lead us to the less good or to sin. Therefore we must consider the matter with its circumstances, its consequences, &c., and if we find some evil in any of these, it is a sign that it is from the devil.

(*β*) From the *end*. Having examined the matter, we must inspect the end towards which the impulse or feeling tends.³ For as the good spirit suggests feelings to excite in our will laudable and honest intentions, and also holy ends tending to perfect us in our state, so the devil, though he may at first dissemble, nevertheless by degrees insinuates secretly some end either sinful, which corrupts and spoils all the good which he represents to us, or which prevents a greater good and the perfection of our state.

(*γ*) From the *manner of moving*. This St. Ignatius lays down in Rules 1 and 7. It is the custom of God and the good spirit to inspire a certain joy and peace, and of the evil spirit melancholy, despondency, and turmoil, according to the disposition and state of the soul.

¹ *Direct.* xxviii. § 5.

² Suarez, ix. c. 5. §§ 31, 37.

³ Rule 3.

If it be well disposed and is striving to advance in virtue, the good spirit moves it gently and sweetly with increase of joy, elasticity, and peace, whilst, on the contrary, the malignant spirit depresses and perturbs it. But if the soul be in sin and swayed by its passions, the devil tries to lull it into false security, to distract and dissipate it, whereas the good spirit endeavours to draw it from its terrible state by stings of conscience, by fear of God's judgments, &c., as we see in the seventh Rule.

In the fifth and sixth Rules, St. Ignatius tells us that, when we experience these impulses or feelings, we must carefully examine them in their beginning, progress, and end, and if we discover any evil or less good effect, having found out the enemy, we are to take note how he began and stealthily tried to creep into our hearts; so that, being made more wise by our experience, we may the better guard ourselves against his stratagems and baffle his wily efforts for the future.

We see in these eight rules the wonderful knowledge of St. Ignatius, and his extraordinary prudence and discretion. This discretion is necessary for all of us, not only in regard of the action of the good and evil spirits upon our souls, whether by consolation or desolation, but also in all our undertakings; and, therefore, we ought always to study carefully the progress of our ideas and views, and to avoid rushing too precipitately and being *in a hurry*. It is for want of this discretion that men are often drawn into indiscreet zeal, or to the practice of excess in corporal austerities, surpassing their physical or moral force, until they give way under the burden, and either become useless and unfit for the duties of their state, or plunge into deplorable relaxations. Let us imitate St. Ignatius, and propose to ourselves, in all we do, to act ever according to the measure of Divine grace, as far as it shall be for

God's glory and for our soul's salvation; and above all things let us studiously avoid allowing ourselves to speak or act solely according to the promptings and dictates of our natural feelings.

ON DISTRIBUTION OF ALMS.

NOTE.—St. Ignatius gives us certain rules to be observed in our *ministry* of almsgiving; by this expression denoting to us that it is a duty imposed upon us in regard of all superfluities, and more especially if they are derived from ecclesiastical sources.

In general we may say that the Saint wishes us to apply in such cases the rules which he lays down in the second form of the third manner or time of election as given above.

Rule 1.—If I distribute alms to persons to whom I am allied by ties of family or of close friendship, I ought to be careful that my feelings of attachment prompting me thereto arise from the love of God our Lord, and that my affection is *for* and *in* Him.

Rule 2.—I should consider what advice I would proffer to another in whose spiritual interest I was much concerned were he to consult me in similar circumstances, having only God's glory, the cause of charity, and his soul's good in view.

Rule 3.—Putting myself in the position of one about to die, I should ask myself how much and in what way I should wish to apportion the alms which are at my disposal.

Rule 4.—I should further ask myself what I shall wish to have done in this respect when I shall appear

before the judgment-seat of God, to give an account of my actions.

Rule 5.—If I feel that I am influenced unduly by natural affection or inclination, I should withhold my action until I have reduced that feeling to right order and within the bounds prescribed by faith and right reason; and not allow myself to be influenced by flesh and blood, or any worldly consideration.

Rule 6.—In regard of the quantity of money to be reserved for my own use, I ought, likewise, to apply the same rules.

Rule 7.—In determining the last rule, I must consider my condition, my state, and my circumstances and relations with others; and may put before myself by way of example, Joachim and Anna, who reserved one-third of their income for themselves, whilst they divided the rest between the poor and the Temple. Of our Lord it is said, the birds had nests, but the Son of Man had not whereon to lay His Head, making a sacrifice of all things for others.

N.B.—These rules should be applied, also, to all works of charity and zeal; and in fact, whenever we feel impelled to any thing by natural affections and inclinations, even though it be something good in itself, their application will be of great service.

RULES FOR SCRUPLES.

Another document in the Spiritual Exercises concerns scruples, on which subject St. Ignatius lays down six rules.¹

Rules 1 and 2.—In these two rules we are taught the difference between an erroneous conscience and one that is scrupulous. The first is when our reason, darkened by ignorance, does not see rightly, and consequently condemns us as guilty of sin when there was none: whereas a scrupulous conscience apprehends without real ground an obligation or sin when there is none at all, and this apprehension is accompanied by a certain or probable judgment showing us there is no sin, although it is attended by perplexity or a misgiving, arising either from the devil or from imagination, often so frightening us as to prevent our being able to form a practical judgment. For example, a person has such a dread of a viper that he would not touch it though it was dead. He has a sure and certain judgment that it cannot do him harm as it is dead, and yet the strong apprehension of his imagination so fills him with fear and dread, that he cannot make up his mind to do so. Here the soul is apprehensive and disturbed, though its better judgment declares the fear groundless. Such is scrupulousness. If, on the other hand, he refused to touch it because he really thought or at least doubted that it was alive, he would form an erroneous conscience or judgment. This fundamental doctrine is insinuated by St. Ignatius in those words: *Ex proprio liberi arbitrii motu,*² and *Et quamvis alterâ ex parte veniat in mentem nos minime peccasse.*³

¹ Conf. Suarez, bk. ix. c. 7, § 3.

² Rule 1.

³ Rule 2.

From this it follows that we can act boldly and directly against the scruple, and can reject and despise it: and in so doing we remedy it the sooner, and avoid many extravagant blunders and prevent the scruples from degenerating into erroneous judgments, which are to be eschewed as being false.

Rule 3.—Erroneous judgments must be avoided, as they are false and cannot possibly be of any advantage; but scruples may be turned to good account, inasmuch as they tend to cleanse and purify the soul, for, as says St. Gregory, “It is the nature of well-disposed souls to see faults where in reality there are none.”

Rule 4.—In this rule are exposed the methods of the devil and his wiles, and the way of frustrating them. For if he finds a conscience which is too delicate and timid, he strives to make it more so by apprehensions, sophisms, captious reasonings, and a tempest of scruples; but if he finds it large and careless, he endeavours to stretch it still wider that by degrees it may make little or no account of grievous sins.

Rule 5.—Wherefore, whoever desires to advance in virtue and the way of perfection, must proceed in a contrary manner, and must in the first case dilate and enlarge his heart with a holy liberty of spirit and confidence, and in the second must incline to greater strictness and exactness; and so avoiding both extremes establish himself in the happy medium, where he will enjoy perfect peace of mind.

Rule 6.—Finally, in our daily actions, when we are going to say or do anything which from certain principles, or from the example of virtuous persons, or from the advice of our spiritual guides we know to be good and right, if perchance some scrupulous thought arises to deter or withdraw us from it, we ought to raise up our minds to God and must despise such thought and go forward.

If we square our conduct according to these rules, we shall receive no harm from our scruples which regard the present. As for scruples which regard the past, about our confessions and the like, St. Ignatius has not prescribed any rules,¹ as those already laid down suffice; or perhaps he thought there was no other remedy but obedience to our director. The remedy which Gerson and Suarez propose is to have recourse to God with true humility and contrition, and to remember the good-will we had to do our duty, and to trust to the mercy of God.

NOTE.—When a scrupulous person judges a thing to be unlawful, on light grounds and through false or unfounded fears, or suspects it to be unlawful without any real motive, he should implicitly obey his director, and without examination or hesitation despise and reject his fears and apprehensions.

In dealing with such souls, a director must not show any fear or hesitation that there may have been sin; nor should he appear to hesitate in his replies, but should act with calmness and firmness: Repressing all impatience, he should be kind and patient. Let him avoid all scolding. Let him not rudely dismiss them as obstinate or disobedient, thus proving hardness of heart or ignorance of the terrible sufferings of such a state. It is also imprudent to try to reason with them, as in their present state such persons are incapable of reasoning; by attempting it their obscurities increase and their subtleties are multiplied.

¹ Suarez, bk. ix. c. 7, § 3.

RESOLUTION TO IMITATE JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE SECOND FORM OF ELECTION.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves alone in the presence of God, who puts before us the end for which He made us, that is, “to be likened to the image of His Son.”

Prelude 2.—Let us beg of Him to enlighten our minds that we may know what is wanting in us in this likeness to our Blessed Lord, and to inflame our will that we may resolve at once to correct it.

Point 1.—The end then of all our thoughts, words, and actions, the object of our desires and efforts is to make ourselves as far as possible by God's grace like unto Jesus Christ. Nothing can be more worthy or more ennobling than this end: and the strongest of motives are not wanting to urge us to attain it. Such is the will of His Divine Majesty,¹ and in executing that will we promote His glory, we please His Divine Majesty, and give honour to His well-beloved Son. This motive is enough to urge us to make firm resolutions to strive to imitate Him perfectly in the exercise of poverty, humility, and self-denial.

Another motive will be that thus I prove my gratitude to God. Oh! how it cuts one's heart to think that after all the love of Jesus Christ for us, we, who are so infinitely below Him, can do so little in return, even by the sacrifice of life itself. Well! let us do the

¹ “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren.” (Romans viii. 29.)

best we can; let us often say, "You, O Lord, have done so for love of me, I will do so for love of you."

Another motive is that we by this means secure salvation; for imitation of Jesus Christ is a sign of predestination: and it is also a means of promoting the sanctification of our neighbour.

Point 2.—What counsel should I give to another? Suppose that he had been put under my direction by God, who would call me to an account for the advice which I should give him. Should I recommend a poverty well furnished with comforts and conveniences? Should I advise an easy life, lawful liberty, and gratification of the senses? Should I advise him to ambition, notice, admiration of men, and posts of honour? Or should I not urge him, as far as circumstances permitted, to an imitation of Jesus Christ our Lord in all these respects, and more especially in those points in which he is more wanting? Well, then, if we should advise others to adopt this line of conduct; we must resolve upon the same for ourselves.

Point 3.—Further, when I am lying upon my death-bed, shall I be satisfied to have lived an ordinary trivial life, exempt from mortal sin and from certain venial sins? What sentiments shall I have as to the conveniences and broad views I now have of poverty; of the anxieties and toils endured in order to shine and cut a figure by my learning and talents? In that hour we are left alone with only a crucifix in our hands, a clear sign that this alone can give us consolation, to have lived with Christ on the Cross, to have with Him been dead to the world, and to the world crucified.

Point 4.—What will be my feelings when before the judgment-seat? What shall we think of the facility with which we violate our Rules or neglect the duties of our state? of the indifference to the frequent graces and inspirations of God? of the avidity for applause

and esteem, of the envy and bitter speeches we make of others, of the dislike we feel for others? Alas! the dissimilarity of my life with that of Jesus Christ should fill me with horror and dismay! If I am a companion of Christ, I must surely and without delay begin to do the works of Christ, and clothe myself interiorly and exteriorly with Christ, "putting on the feelings which were in Him." Let us think seriously what are the chief faults in us which mar the imitation, and what are the virtues most wanting in us of which our Lord has set us the example, and come what will, cost what it may, let us resolve at once to correct the one and to strain every nerve to acquire the other. This may be my last opportunity of making this resolution.

Let us make three colloquies, to our Lady, Jesus Christ, and to the Eternal Father, begging the grace to make a good resolution, and the further grace to keep it.¹

We may also further apply the first form of Election to the same subject, to determine what especial virtue in our Blessed Lord we should choose in our desire to imitate Him, and what is the particular fault opposed to it which we are determined to correct between this and our next retreat or Election. The advantages of making this exercise of Election from time to time during the course of the year are inestimable. It has a great influence in forming and moulding our character, and especially in supernaturalizing it.

¹ "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself for me." (Galat. ii. 20.)

JESUS TEMPTED IN THE DESERT.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus after His Baptism withdrew into the desert, how He fasted for forty days and overcame the temptations of the devil.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the desert on the west of the Jordan, the haunt of panthers and wild birds.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, namely, to know Jesus and the lessons He teaches us in this mystery, and to imitate Him more closely, especially His spirit of prayer, mortification, courage, and humility.

Point 1.—Jesus is led into the desert, far from the crowd which had witnessed the wonderful testimony of Heaven in His regard, and thus teaches us how to fly from occasions of vainglory. He retires into the desert. Solitude favours the study of truth, encourages good thoughts, allays the tumult of our affections and passions, facilitates converse with God; moreover, He wishes by penance and prayer to prepare Himself for

¹ "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. . . . And the tempter coming, said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered, and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the Holy City, and set Him upon a pinnacle of the Temple, and said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, That He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him: It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him; and behold angels came and ministered to Him." (St. Matt. iv. 1-11. Comp. St. Mark i.; St. Luke iv.)

His great Mission. Let us learn to love solitude, and as far as possible and is consistent with our duties, to fly from the conversation of men, *Quoties inter homines minus homo redii*. How sad it is to think that retirement for a few days' retreat is to us a terrible and weary trial! He spends the days and nights in prayer, and we who have such cause for prayer, can hardly do so for one short hour. He who had no rebellious flesh to subdue, would teach us mortification of our sensual appetites and temperance in eating and drinking. Let us learn to imitate Him in this spirit of prayer and mortification, and thereby also do penance for our neglect of them in the past, and obtain grace and strength to overcome the temptations which await us in the future.

Point 2.—He was tempted. The Son of God tempted! Let us adore His profound humility in demeaning Himself so low as to submit to be insulted by the devil! And this He does for our sakes and example, and to gain grace that we also may overcome; to teach us to stand always in justice and fear, and to prepare our souls for temptation,¹ for the devil like a lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.² We must imitate Jesus Christ, if we would have the grace to overcome. And let us not be surprised at our temptations. He would be tempted to *gluttony*, then to *vanity* and *vainglory*, and lastly to *avarice*! If we are acceptable to God, it is necessary that temptation should try us,³ and we shall be tried, it may be by gross and revolting temptations; yet let us fear nothing, but treat the devil with cool contempt and he will fly.⁴ Let us not, like Eve, enter into parley with our enemy, but promptly repel him; let us

¹ Eccclus. ii. 1.

² 1 St. Peter v.

³ Tobias xii. 13.

⁴ "Be subject therefore to God, but resist the devil, and he will fly from you." (St. James iv. 7.)

strengthen ourselves by recalling the precepts of God, and by supernatural considerations add strength to our natural reason. If you argue with the devil, he will by sophistry mislead you. Let us observe how he flatters, decoys, and promises! how he tries to lure us on to love and hope for things earthly and carnal and to indulge our passions, and this by promises often false and vain, which it is not in his power to fulfil. But let us not fear him, for he cannot harm us unless we voluntarily allow it; for the grace of God, which will never be wanting to us, is more powerful than the combined forces of the infernal spirits.

Point 3.—Angels came and ministered to Him. Thus the Eternal Father celebrated the victory of His Son by sending His angels to congratulate Him. So, too, with us, trials and temptations soon are over, and are succeeded by heavenly peace and consolations. Woe to us if we lose heart and mistrust our God. Want of confidence begets weakness. We must not fear; with Jesus we shall overcome; and every act of resistance, every call upon Divine help will merit for us a crown of glory in Heaven. Wherefore, no matter how long the struggle, nor how often it may be repeated, though one kind of temptation be succeeded by another, let us never be disheartened. The only thing to fear is the danger of presumption, and of attributing to ourselves the victory which belongs alone to the grace of God. Let us remark that St. Luke said that the devil left Him *for a time*, that is, to return again later. So, too, must we be ever on the alert. We may conquer, but we must be prepared for a return of the devil. The life of a Christian is a perpetual warfare, and as long as we have life we are liable to fresh attacks; but, let us encourage ourselves with the thought, the strife is but for a few fleeting years, and then it will be succeeded by an eternity of peace and glory.

Let us, in conclusion, thank our Blessed Lord that for our sake and for our example He would condescend to be tempted; let us be confounded and ashamed at our cowardice before an enemy whose sole resources are drawn from the faint-heartedness of man, and who is only a lion when he sees that we are rabbits, and let us resolve to watch, and by prayer and fasting secure victory. End with "Our Father."

If time allows we should make two repetitions of the Baptism and Temptations of our Lord, as also an application of the senses to the same.

THE MIRACLE OF CANA IN GALILEE.¹

NOTE.—Various reasons are assigned by different writers, why our Lord would be present at the marriage-feast in Cana. Thus it is said that He wished to show honour to His relatives, and to sanctify the wedding by His presence. This is on the supposition that the bridegroom on the occasion was no other than Simon the

¹ "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is it to Me and thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry it to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when he had tasted the water made wine and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee: and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." (St. John ii. 1—11.)

son of Cleophas, and nephew of St. Joseph, who on witnessing the miracle followed Christ and became one of the twelve.¹ A second reason was, that He might give His Apostles an example of humility, by being present at the humble wedding, and at the same time by the miracle might show His esteem for poverty, and might save His host from confusion. A third reason which is suggested is, that He might show His disciples that He was the true Messiah by converting the water into wine.

The commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The history, in brief, is that our Lord and His Blessed Mother were invited to a wedding, in the poor village of Cana: and were there with some of the first disciples of Jesus. He turned water into wine, and His disciples believed in Him.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the humble dwelling, the company present, Mary, Jesus, the first disciples.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we really desire, that is, to know our dear Lord more clearly and to love Him more sincerely, and let us ask Him to show His power and generosity in our regard, by changing our hearts and making them more like His.

Point 1.—Christ is invited with His disciple to the wedding. Never was wedding-feast so distinguished as this, which was honoured by the presence of the King of kings and His Mother, the Lady of the world (*domina mundi*); and yet everything bespoke poverty, simplicity, humility, chastity. Let us admire our Jesus who makes Himself all to all, and fills all with peace and spiritual joy; yet His every word and action is stamped with a modest, amiable, and simple dignity, and His mind and Heart are in close communing with His Father.

¹ Baron. *Hist.* bk. viii.

Let us observe His great abstemiousness, especially in regard of wine and such delicacies as were provided.

His Blessed Mother and the other women are busy administering to the guests, striving to anticipate their wants, and promoting the happiness of all. With what quiet and unaffected modesty our Lady moves about, with what sweetness and recollection she arranges for the comfort of each, and with what delight she discharges the humble duties of a handmaid. Let us take these lessons to heart that are given to us by Jesus and Mary, and at our meals let us practise the abstemiousness and mortification of Jesus, His modesty, recollection, and charity, leaving the best for others and taking the worst for ourselves; repressing over-eagerness and any rudeness, whilst at the same time with simplicity and true humility we shun all affectation.

Point 2.—The Mother points out to her Son the failure of wine. Consider how the loving heart of our Lady is moved with compassion when she perceives that the wine is failing; she sees how the poor hostess is nervous and ashamed, not knowing what is to be done. At once, with all the tenderness of a mother, and full confidence in her Child, she gently whispers to Him that there is no more wine; then she tells the waiting-women to carry out whatever Jesus may order them to do. She makes no request of her Son, knowing well that His tender and loving Heart will come to the rescue to save His hosts any feeling of confusion or shame. Oh! would to God we knew the Sacred Heart as Mary knew it! With how great confidence should we then approach Him in all our wants, and with what success, even though His hour for help was not yet come. We may also consider how our dear Lord would have this incident recorded to convince us of the power of our Lady over Him, even in His Divine Nature, and also to teach us that through her we may

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obtain all we ask, as He can refuse nothing to her: for, as St. Bernard says, "God hath so willed it, that we should have all things through Mary." Let us consider the reverence, benevolence, and charity of our Lord's remark to His Mother, when she drew His attention to the wine having run short. "Woman (Lady), what matters it to thee and Me?" I had determined that My first miracle should not refer to temporal things, but I will, out of reverence, anticipate the hour, and manifest My Divine power. In regard to the work of My Father which I do, I must obey Him, but as to My works as thy Son, in all these I am subject to thee; yet knowing thy good pleasure, I will do this work of My Father, who is in Heaven. It was thus she understood Him whom she knew perfectly, and therefore did she give her directions to those who served at table. Let us beg through Mary that we too may know His Sacred Heart more and more intimately, that with her we may love it more ardently, and may confide in it more perfectly.

Point 3.—He changed the water into wine. At our Lord's bidding, the six large vessels were filled with water, and on a sudden our Lord, by His almighty power, changed all into wine. Then were all present struck with wonder, and filled with great joy and gratitude. Let us contemplate the profound awe with which they regarded the modest and humble Jesus; how by this miracle their minds were enlightened and they recognized His Divine power, and with love their hearts were inflamed at His delicate consideration for His hosts, at His generous charity towards their guests. For Himself He will refuse to exert His power, nor will He do anything to assuage His thirst; it is only when the comfort, pleasure, or benefit of others is concerned, that He will manifest His absolute control over the laws of nature. But what is the conversion of water into

wine compared with what we daily witness, namely, the conversion of wine into His own sacred and living Blood! in the sacred nuptial-feast in which by receiving Him we become one flesh, one blood with Him! Yet how little awe do we feel, how scanty the reverence or love, how little the gratitude which we show to Him. At the same time it cost Him but the smallest expression of will to work His first miracle, whereas no created intellect can conceive the price He has paid, the sufferings He has undergone, the humiliations which He has to bear in giving us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to be our drink.

O my soul, how often does the wine of holy charity and devotion run short in us! how cold and indifferent, how ill prepared do we present ourselves at the sacred banquet when we ascend to the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice or to receive Holy Communion! Let us fly to Mary, let us beg of her to ward off our confusion and shame, by suggesting our necessities to her Jesus and telling Him we have no wine. She will not be wanting to us; she, at least, if with humility and confidence we fly to her, will prove a Mother to us, for she is merciful and the Mother of Mercy.

In our colloquy let us humbly beg of our Lady to represent our wants to Jesus, to ask of Him to change our hearts, make them more like His own, that we may love what He loved, poverty, sufferings, and humiliations, and say the "Hail Mary."

Let us also ask of Jesus to present the same petition to His Eternal Father; and say the *Anima Christi*. Finally, let us earnestly request the same of the Eternal Father. End with the "Our Father."

CHRIST DRIVES THE SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Brief recapitulation of the history.

Prelude 2.—Let us in imagination take up a position in the court of the Gentiles within the enclosure of the Temple.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg from our hearts to apprehend the spirit manifested by our Lord in this mystery, and grace to imitate it when God's glory or our neighbour's salvation calls for its exercise.

Point 1.—Jesus drives the sellers out of the Temple. Through the negligence, indifference, and avarice of the priests, those that sold oxen, sheep, goats, and doves had presumed to plant their stalls and pens in the sacred precincts of the Temple: there, too, the money-changers had their tables strewn with coins of different countries for the convenience of the purchasers from different lands. We may easily imagine the crush and confusion, the babel of sounds, the lowing of oxen, the bleating of goats and sheep, the shout of those tending them, of buyers and sellers: often, as we are told, so loud was the din that the voices of the priests could not be heard; yet all this desecration was permitted for the gain of a little money by the priests. Jesus suddenly appears in the midst: filled with holy

¹ "And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem; and He found in the Temple them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when He had made as it were a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, the sheep also and the oxen; and the money also of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew. And to them that sold doves He said: 'Take these things hence, and make not the house of My Father a house of traffic.'" (St. John ii. 13—16.)

indignation at the sight of all this desecration, at the venality of the ministers of worship of His Heavenly Father, and at this insult offered to His Divine Majesty: armed with some fragments of rope He proceeds to drive them helter-skelter before Him, and turns over the tables of the money-changers, scattering their coins on the ground; but to the poor men who were selling doves He said in gentle terms, adds St. Ignatius, Take these away, by this denoting His pity and compassion for the poor who knew no better or had been misled by others or misinterpreted the silence of the priests, at whose door lay all the blame.

Such was the jealousy of God for the honour of His Temple. He had already proved it many times, as we see in the case of Heliodorus¹ and of Rabsaces.²

Yet what was the dignity of that Temple in comparison with our churches, or its holiness compared with that of ours, in which the Thrice Holy deigns to take up His abode, night and day, and in which His Life is perpetuated and renewed; in which the Divine Word, begotten before all ages, by whom all things were made, the King of glory, conceals all His majesty together with His lovely and beautiful Humanity, beneath the sacramental veils. Should not this manifestation of infinite condescension and love intensify our admiration, reverence, adoration, and love? and if we have this, oh! with what reverence and respect should we enter the house of our Lord; how gladly should we respond to His invitation to go and find consolation and peace from Him when weary and heavily laden,³ to draw water of joy when we have thirst.⁴

Should we not enter into the feelings of the Psalmist when he says, "How dear to my heart are Thy taber-

¹ 2 Mach. iii.

² 4 Kings xviii.

³ St. Matt. xi. 28.

⁴ Isaiah lv. 1.

nacles, O Lord God of the virtues; better one day in Thy house, O Lord, than an age spent in the palaces of kings."¹

Point 2.—He overturned the tables of the rich money-changers. Here St. Ignatius contrasts the conduct of our Lord towards the rich with that towards the poor. These rich money-changers were usurers and robbers, slaves to an inordinate love of money, who to satisfy their craving for gain, did not hesitate to violate the laws of justice and charity. From the manner in which our Lord treats them we see in what horror He held them, and may learn with what severity He will judge them on the great Day of Judgment. He also practically declared Himself the Lord and Master of all things: nor did any one dare to resist Him, but only asked for an explanation why He so acted. His only reply was an appeal to His future Resurrection, saying, "Destroy this Temple and in three days will I build it up again," thus justifying Himself by His Divine power and authority.

Let us admire the fortitude and courage of Jesus in upholding the honour of His Father and defending the holiness of the Temple in the face of the Pharisees and priests, who He knows will put Him to the cruel death. Here let us learn a lesson from our King and Captain, not to fear the rich and powerful when it is question of defending the honour of God or His Church, but to inculcate the Divine principles and commands, even though death may be the result.

Point 3.—He also addressed the poor dove sellers. With great meekness He addresses these poor people, and tells them to take their doves away, charging them not to turn His Father's house into a house of traffic: He thus shows His predilection for them, having Himself, for our sakes, chosen to be poor when He might

¹ Psalm lxxxiii. 2, 11.

have been rich, came into the world in a stable, and went naked out of the world on the Cross. They were alarmed when they saw Him treat the rich with such implacable severity, but quickly resumed their peace as they beheld Him approach them in calm and loving majesty: they listen to His admonition and to the reasons of His conduct. His sweet and loving Heart opened itself to them, and they at once complied without a murmur, obeying His instruction. By this His conduct our Lord would give us a lesson how to treat the poor. He surely has not the spirit of Jesus Christ who courts the society of the great and wealthy, who sacrifices his principles or his duty rather than give them offence, or who glories in their acquaintance: but he who loves and esteems the poor, treats them with gentleness, labours to instruct and elevate them, and regards Jesus Christ in them. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, as long as you have done it to one of the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me."¹ It is true that both rich and poor are made to the likeness of God, are the adopted children of God, are redeemed by the life-blood of Jesus, and are called to the possession of eternal glory, and consequently are to be treated with real honour, respect, and love, but it is a sad error to cultivate the rich, the great, and powerful at the expense or neglect of the poor, who stand more in need of our charity, of our encouragement, our counsel and our sympathy.

Let us then learn from our Blessed Lord an ardent zeal for the promotion of God's glory, fearlessness in defending His honour, great reverence in His holy temple, great care in the divinely established services of religion. Let us learn, too, love of the poor, who are Christ's substitutes, and let us treat them with patience and reverence, for His sake.

¹ St. Matt. xxv. 40.

End with a fervent colloquy with our Blessed Lord and say the "Our Father."

VOCATION OF APOSTLES.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus comes forth from the desert, selects His companions, and destines them to become His Apostles.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture Galilee and the shore of Genezareth.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, which is an

¹ "The next day again John stood, and two of his disciples. And beholding Jesus walking, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. . . . He saith to them: Come and see. They came and saw where He abode, and they stayed with Him that day. Now it was about the tenth hour. And Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who had heard of John, and followed Him. He findeth first his brother Simon and saith to him, We have found the Messias; and he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus, looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter. On the following day He would go forth into Galilee, and He findeth Philip. And Jesus saith to him: Follow Me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him: We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth. And Nathanael, said to him: Can anything of good come from Nazareth? Philip said to him: Come and see. . . . Nathanael answered Him, and said: Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." (St. John i. 35—49.) "And passing by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea, and Jesus said to them: Come after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And immediately leaving their nets they followed Him. And going on from thence a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship; and forthwith He called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed Him." (St. Mark i. 16—20.) "And when Jesus passed on from thence, He saw a man sitting in the custom-house named Matthew, and He said to him: Follow Me. And he arose up and followed Him." (St. Matt. ix. 9.)

intimate knowledge of the Heart of Jesus Christ, that loving Him we may imitate Him.

Point 1.—Peter and Andrew first were called to a certain acquaintance with Jesus;¹ secondly, to follow Him and then return to their own employment;² thirdly, to follow Him absolutely.³ God can call us without any previous disposition on our part, but generally He looks to the gifts which He has bestowed on us, be they natural or virtues infused or acquired, and gradually prepares us to follow His call. So it was with Andrew, who in his first meeting with Jesus was inflamed with love and zeal for Him, and who introduced his brother Peter, upon whom Jesus gazes and to whom He assigns a future. Later, from Peter's boat He addresses the crowd, and asks the brothers, after He had spoken, to follow Him. Finally, He commands them to follow Him. And at once they break away from every earthly tie to home, family, and friends, and join Him, never even by death again to be separated from Him.

Here is a lesson for us! Is there no sacrifice which our Lord calls upon me to make, no tie to be broken, no affection to be rooted out, in order that I may follow Him perfectly in my state of life? Does He not call upon me to make greater efforts than I have hitherto made, to acquire more perfect detachment from carnal and sensual things, and more perfect hatred of the spirit and maxims of the children of the world? We have resolved to respond to His call, and have made it the subject of election. Oh, may His grace enable us to imitate the example of Andrew and Peter, and may it be said of us at last, "And leaving all things, they followed Him," and said with truth.

Point 2.—He called Philip⁴ and Matthew⁵ and James and John.⁶ Our Lord calls them in the same spirit of

¹ St. John i.

² St. Luke v.

³ St. Matt. iv.

⁴ St. John i.

⁵ St. Matt. ix.

⁶ St. Matt. iv.

love, and gratuitously, and meets with equal docility, promptitude, and generosity. Long and inveterate habits, strong affections, opposition of character, all yield easily and with pleasure to the sweet and gentle call of Jesus Christ.

So also if we only generously correspond to the call which our Lord makes upon us during this retreat, we shall find that neither rooted habits, repugnances of nature, nor natural disposition will prevent the efficacy of God's grace, and we shall be able to say with St. Paul, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."¹

As to the other Apostles, whose vocation is not mentioned in the Gospels, we see how they differed in character, gifts, position, customs, and habits; yet by God's grace they were all, except Judas, moulded and formed to the same high vocation, proving to us the omnipotent power of God's grace. Let this give us unbounded confidence in God, who "is faithful, by whom we are called to the Society of His Son," and let us resolve to respond to this His vocation by the fidelity we show to the resolution we have taken in our matter of election. This grace will not be wanting to us if only we are persevering in prayer and in companionship with our Lord.

Point 3.—(a) These Apostles were of a *low estate*. The worldly-wise are distinguished by the choice of the fittest means for the end they have in view; but God, by choosing means out of all fitness and proportion. Thus in His Apostles there was no culture, no birth, no wealth, but they were poor, rude, illiterate fishermen. This He did to convince us that it was all His own work, and to take away all grounds for self-conceit.² Let us then take no credit to ourselves if

¹ Philipp. iv. 13.

² "But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath He chosen, that

He has chosen us to do any work for His praise and glory. (β) Yet they were called to an *exalted dignity*—to the dignity of intimate friendship and companionship with Christ, and of being His colleagues in the work of His Father, founders and pillars of His Church, dispensers of His mysteries. There is no earthly dignity to compare with it, no matter how glorious or exalted it may be. (γ) They received gifts and graces, by which they were raised above all the Fathers both of the Old and New Law. They were endowed with the spirit of wisdom and fortitude, the gift of miracles and tongues, and the power to conquer the great idolatrous world and all its powerful princes, and the devil himself. So too we may rest assured that God will generously grant to us those graces which are required to carry out those duties of our state of life to which He has called us.

Let us pray for this in a triple colloquy, such as we made after the meditation on "Three Classes of Men." End with "Our Father."

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus Christ ascends the mountain in Galilee, followed by a large crowd, and gathering His chosen disciples round Him, He makes a discourse to them.¹

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the scene in our imagination.

He may confound the strong ; and the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He may bring to nought things that are ; that no flesh should glory in His sight." (1 Cor. i. 27.)

• ¹ St. Matt. v. 1—48.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, that is, light to grasp the doctrine of Jesus and grace to reduce it fully to practice.

Point 1.—He promulgates the *Eight Beatitudes*.¹ The crowd had followed Him to witness His miracles and to hear His preaching. When He had healed their sick, exorcized those who were possessed, and had taught them, He ascended higher up the mountain, and gave His Apostles special instructions. Let us join them and be illuminated.² As a king in the midst of his subjects, or a father in his family, “solemnly raising His eyes, He opens His mouth to teach them.” All this denotes the gravity of the occasion and the importance of His discourse.

Blessed are the *poor* in spirit, the meek, they that mourn, that hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the peacemakers, and they that suffer persecution. Of these, *three* relate to perfect abnegation, to which we were pledged in the “Kingdom of Christ,” namely, poverty, mourning, and persecution for justice’ sake; *three* refer to our conduct to our neighbour, meekness, mercy, and peacemaking; the other *two* regard more immediately our relations with God, cleanness of heart and hunger after justice. Let us consider each of these, their depth of meaning, the examples of each left us by Jesus Christ, and the reward attached to each.

¹ “And opening His mouth He taught them, saying : Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek : for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful : for they shall find mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart : for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (St. Matt. v. 2—10.)

² “Come ye to Him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded.” (Psalm xxxiii. 6.)

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God.” They are blessed, for they are the objects of the special love and interest of Jesus Christ, they are in a station more like His own, they are less exposed to danger and temptations, are on the right road to eternal beatitude. Yet this blessing is not for those who suffer privation from necessity and against their will, but only for such as cheerfully accept of their hard lot, or who through love of God have voluntarily made themselves poor in effect, or have detached themselves from their possessions, and whom we considered in the third of the “Three Classes.”

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.” Closely connected with poverty is the virtue of meekness. The meek keep under control their feelings of impatience, anger, or vindictiveness; accept with calmness and resignation adversity or injuries from their fellow-men, confiding in the fatherly providence of God, and directing all things that happen to His glory and their own salvation. Of this virtue our Lord proposes Himself as our model—“Learn of Me, that I am meek and humble of heart”¹—and example, when He accepted the kiss of Judas, forgave the denial of Peter and the thief on the Cross, and prayed for forgiveness of His executioners. They shall hereafter possess the Kingdom of Heaven, and in this life they possess their souls in peace.

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” This blessing is not given to all who mourn, or who on earth would not then be in comfort and consolation. It is only attached to those who in sorrow and with resignation accept their trials, who bewail their own and other’s sins, who maintain the strife against their flesh and its concupiscences, who are faithful in the times of desolation or persecution, &c.

¹ St. Matt. xi. 29.

They shall be comforted in the next world by "the future glory which shall be revealed in them,"¹ and also in this present life, for their love for God will make those things sweet to them which human nature regards as bitter and sad.

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill." They that hunger and thirst after habitual justice by which they are sanctified, and after actual justice in the actions which they perform, are strenuous in the exercise of virtue, aspire to that which is perfect, and strive to unite themselves ever more closely with our Lord by a lively faith and ardent charity, and by frequent reception of Holy Communion. It is to such that abundance of supernatural gifts and graces are promised: it is such that "He filleth with good things."²

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy." He is merciful or pitiful of heart who loves and assists those that are wretched, whether they suffer exteriorly or interiorly; but this mercy, to secure the blessing, must rest on a supernatural basis, and be exercised for God's sake. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is the teaching of Jesus Christ,³ which saying the world reverses, "Happier to get than give." It is by our mercy that our eternal lot is to be decided: for it is by charity, the mother of mercy, that "a multitude of sins is covered."⁴ The merciful even in this life are led by God's grace to seek remission of their sins, and in the next are made partakers of eternal mercy.

"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." The clean of heart are, first, all those who are not conscious to themselves of mortal sin unrepented of; secondly, those who are free from venial sin, which stains the soul, disposes to mortal sin, and removes us

¹ Romans viii. 18.

² St. Matt. i. 53.

³ Acts xx. 35.

⁴ 1 St. Peter iv. 8.

so to speak to a distance from God; thirdly, all those who seek in all things only the will of God and His service and praise. They shall see God face to face with special clearness in the next life, and also in this shall be blessed with a pure and keen knowledge of Him. So was it with John the Baptist and that other John whom Jesus loved.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.” Such are they who are meek and show themselves amiable and gentle to all, and avoid giving offence to others, unless it be in a good and just cause. Such too are they who smooth down quarrels, reconcile those that are at variance, and who strive to induce men to seek reconciliation with God, and with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who brought peace into the world to all men of good-will. They are called and are in reality sons of God by adoption and brothers of Jesus Christ by grace,¹ most dear to Him who came down from Heaven to establish this peace.

“Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” To do bravely is to be a hero, but to suffer greatly and well is to be a Christian; and to suffer is in general far harder than to do; whence we may say that of all Beatitudes this bears away the palm. To have to endure injuries, contempt, pain, and death, because we do our duty, or for our religion, or because we observe the laws of God, &c. Such persecutions separate us from the world and drive us to God, they make us like to our great original, and force us to seek consolation from above. Hence it was that St. Ignatius prayed that there never might be a time in which his Society might be without suffering.

Let us examine ourselves and see how much we have been wanting in our efforts to secure the blessings

¹ Galat. iv. 7.

here promised; let us make acts of sorrow for our past negligence, and firm resolutions to strive more earnestly for the future.

Point 2.—He exhorts them to a *right use* of their *talents*.¹ Let us see the astonishment of the Apostles on hearing these truths, which have been concealed from the wise ones of the world, and the modesty, earnestness, and avidity with which they listen, as in this second part of His discourse He treats of the *three-fold duties* of an *Apostle*. "You are the salt of the earth." Salt gives flavour to food and preserves it from corruption; so you by the sanctity of your teaching and conduct, and by your efficacy in prayer, must save others from corruption. If these two qualities be wanting, we are fit for nothing. "You are the light of the world," so that by your teaching you are to dispel error, sin, and ignorance. Hence let us see the necessity of acquiring not only a theoretical, but also a practical knowledge of the science of the saints; for to have the former without the latter is to be like a tinkling cymbal. "You are as a city upon the mountain." It is the duty and office of the real apostle to gather round him a society of men bound together by the bonds of charity and united in their views and prosecution of good, living a holy life, raised above sub-lunary things, and persevering with firmness and constancy figured by the mountain. So must we become all to all men, that by our charity and self-devotion we may gain all to Christ.

Point 3.—In the third part of His discourse, Jesus convicts the wisdom of the world of folly. Better to

¹ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, where-with shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out and to be trodden on by men. You are the light of the world. . . . So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." (St. Matt. v. 13—16.)

be a fool with Christ than to be worldly-wise.¹ He came to perfect, not to destroy the Law, and this He does by requiring not only external observance, but also the service and worship and internal adherence of the heart; and further, by superadding the Evangelical Counsels, we are not only to abstain from wounding, but also from anger in regard of our neighbour; not only from acts of impurity, but also from deliberate thought, word, or desire against the virtue of chastity; not only from perjury, but also from all swearing; and lastly, henceforth it will not suffice to love only our neighbour, but we must go still further: we are to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who persecute us or calumniate us, and do all kinds of evil things against us. To the wise ones of this world, all we have said above is mere folly, whereas the infinite wisdom of God commands it. Let us take these lessons to heart, and examine how far we have reduced them to practice.

In whatever state we may be, whether ecclesiastical or religious, whether in the family or in a position of authority, we are, according to our position in life, bound to observe the Beatitudes; we are to be as salt, or as light, and in the observance of the law we must not rest satisfied with simple external compliance, but must observe it in spirit and in truth. How far are we convinced of these obligations? How much have we failed, and by doing so have to confess with shame that we have been rather a source of scandal or bad example, than a cause of edification.

Let us in our colloquy pray for the grace to correct what has been faulty, and to see more practically the

¹ "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain." (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

means by which we may correct ourselves. End with
 "Our Father."

OUR LORD STILLS THE STORM AT SEA.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Whilst the Apostles were on the Sea of Galilee and Jesus was asleep, there came on a fearful tempest. His disciples in their terror awoke Him; upon which He rebuked them for their want of faith. He then commanded the winds and the waves, and forthwith there came a perfect calm, to the amazement of them all.

Prelude 2.—We will picture to ourselves the sea, the Apostles, and the attendant circumstances.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly to know our dear Lord as He displays Himself in this mystery, that we may love and admire Him more ardently and may put all our trust in Him.

Point 1.—During our Lord's sleep a great tempest arose. When our Lord had with His usual zeal, simplicity, and fervour been instructing the crowd on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, seeing that evening

¹ "And when He entered into the boat the disciples followed Him. And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And they came to Him, and awaked Him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them, O ye of little faith. Then rising up He commanded the winds and the waves, and there came a great calm." (St. Matt. viii. 23—26.)

"They take Him even as He was in the ship, and there were other ships with Him. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the ship was filled. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow: and they awake Him, and say to Him: Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish? And rising up, He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said to them, Why are you fearful? Have you not faith yet?" (St. Mark iv. 36—40.)

was coming on, He said to His Apostles, "Let us cross over to the other shore." They therefore went with Jesus into the boat of Peter and put out to sea, whilst others of the disciples followed after them. And lo! when they least expected it, the winds arose and there burst a violent tempest over them. The waves dashed over them and threatened to swamp their boat. Yet, though the storm roared and the boat threatened at every moment to sink, Jesus slept, though His Heart was watching.

This world is well represented by a vast sea, over which we all have to voyage on our way to our eternal home, but alas! not all in one vessel, that of Peter, or of Holy Church. How many are stranded, how many are tempest-tossed and are swallowed up by the waves. Even of those in the bark of Peter, not all reach the shores of a happy eternity, being lost in the storm of their unruly passions, or allured by the siren of unlawful pleasures, or fall overboard into the abyss of pride and independence. Often too Almighty God permits His Church or its members to be overtaken by perils and severe trials, either that His power may be manifested in man's infirmity, or to compel us to have recourse to Him by prayer, or again, to convince us of our helplessness without His aid, thereby compelling us to humility. Meanwhile Jesus seems to sleep: *seems*, indeed, when He leaves us in desolation, when faith seems dead and charity grows cold, yet His Heart is ever watchful and ready in due season to come to our help: "He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."¹ In cases of desolation and trial let us also have recourse to Jesus Christ in earnest prayer, imploring Him and insisting with Him, though He appears neither to hear us nor to

¹ 1 Cor. x. 13.

care for us, that He would save us lest we perish. Let us, even though fierce storms of temptation assail us, repose with confidence under the protection of our good and loving Father, and say with the Psalmist, "In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest."¹

Point 2.—The terrified Apostles awoke Him: whom He reprehends for their little faith, saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" The faith of the Apostles was as yet weak. Jesus as Man was asleep; but in His Divine Nature, from which alone they could expect help and safety, He never slept, and consequently, whether asleep or awake, they were equally secure under His Divine protection: just as in the Blessed Sacrament, although we do not see His Humanity, which might be asleep or absent, He still is present and in the full possession and exercise of His infinite power. Such is the teaching of holy faith. It was for the want of this faith that our Blessed Lord, in terms at once gentle and paternal, reproves the Apostles. It was to strengthen them in this virtue, so necessary for them in the high vocation to which He called them, that He had ordained this very tempest; it is from this firm faith, by which we are led to recognize in all circumstances of life the power, goodness, and providence of God, that springs that invincible confidence of the saints which obtains all that they may desire. "Amen, I say to you, if ye have faith like unto a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you."² But as says St. James: "We must ask with an unhesitating faith: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the sea."

Our Lord said, "Why are ye fearful?" This arises from the apprehension lest God will not furnish us with

¹ Psalm iv. 9.

² St. Matt. xvii. 19.

the desired help, which betrays a mistrust either in the promises of God, or of His power or goodness: and it is the effort of the enemy of our human nature to inspire us with such feelings, thereby to fill us with disgust, despondency, and despair. Let us beware of these artifices of the devil, and with holy Job let us say, "If Thou shouldst slay me, in Thee will I hope,"¹ for we know that Jesus is with us in our tribulation, He will snatch us from it, and will turn it to our and His own glory.

Point 3.—"He commanded the winds and the sea, and men marvelled, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?" Let us contemplate our Lord as He rises from sleep, and standing up with all the majesty, power, and authority of His Divinity, He bids the winds be still and the fierce waters be calm: at His words the tempest ceases, and there is a perfect calm. How often in the history of the Church do we see her threatened with utter destruction, either by the fires or swords of her persecutors, or the disloyalty or revolution of her own children, who reject or rise up against her authority; and men begin to doubt if she will survive! How often again are we sorely tried by the machinations of our enemies, the infidelity of friends, the rebellion of our passions, or by the temptations of the devil! Or again, how often are we plunged into a state of desolation, in which prayer is almost impossible, the light of faith seems extinguished, hope appears to leave us, charity is hardly felt, and we are inclined to abandon all effort! This is allowed by God that the power and majesty and love of Jesus Christ may be glorified. Let us, O my soul, have courage and confidence. Jesus is by our side; in due season He will dispel the storm, and we shall in His own good time find peace suddenly restored

¹ Job xiii. 15.

to our souls. Let us remain faithful to our spiritual duties, and adhere to the resolutions which we have made in happier times; let us hope against hope, and our Jesus, who is faithful, loyal, and true, coming will come and will not tarry, and will say to us, Peace be with you.

Let us make our colloquy, and end with "Our Father."

CHRIST WALKS UPON THE SEA.¹

NOTE.—We remark that St. Ignatius does not follow the chronological order in the several contemplations which he suggests to the exercitant, if time, or his special circumstance, or his dispositions enable him to prolong the Second Week of the Exercises.

In the present case, it may be that he desires to impress still more upon the exercitant the great necessity of unlimited confidence in God and diffidence in ourselves, if we are to do much for His glory and praise, as we saw in the preceding contemplation.

¹ "And forthwith Jesus obliged His disciples to go up into the boat and to go before Him over the water till He dismissed the people. And having dismissed the multitude, He went up into a mountain alone to pray. But the boat in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking upon the sea. And they seeing Him were troubled saying: It is an apparition. And they cried out for fear. And immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying: It is I, fear ye not. And Peter making answer, said: Lord if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. And He said, Come. And Peter going down out of the boat walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind was strong he was afraid; and when he began to sink he cried out, Lord, save me. And Jesus stretching forth His hand, took hold of him and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt. And when they were come up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat adored Him, saying: Indeed, Thou art the Son of God." (St. Matt. xiv. 22—32.)

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The Evangelist tells us how Jesus, after disbanding the multitude, bade His Apostles to recross the sea, whilst He retired to the hills for the night. A storm arose, and He came down from the hill, walked over the sea, to the great terror of His Apostles until they recognized who it was. With the Master's permission, Peter goes on the water towards Him; but getting frightened, and beginning to sink, cried out to Jesus, who rebuked him, then took him by the hand, and they both entered the boat. Suddenly the wind lulled, and they found themselves on the shore with their boat.

Prelude 2.—Let us form in our mind a general picture of the scene.

Prelude 3.—Let us again with great earnestness ask for what we want, namely, to know intimately our Blessed Lord, so that we may love Him more ardently and humbly strive to confide in Him more perfectly, in all the circumstances of our lives.

Point 1.—Jesus sends His Apostles away, and retires for the night to pray. Jesus had wrought the wonderful miracle of the multiplication of loaves, and was dismissing the people to their homes, for they had a long way to go, and evening was coming on. We may picture to ourselves their feelings of admiration, of awe, and of gratitude at this manifestation of Divine goodness, power, and love on the part of our Lord; perhaps, also, they showed it to a certain extent towards His Apostles who had helped the Master by distributing the food amongst them. Was it lest His Apostles might be tempted to self-complacency, or was it perhaps to try their obedience, or to exercise them in humility? We do not know; but perhaps it was for all these reasons combined, that St. Matthew observes, "And forthwith He obliged His disciples to go up into

the boat, and to go before Him over the water, till He dismissed the people." He does not give them time to dismiss the people, or to receive any expression from them of gratitude or admiration, but summarily sends them to their boat, bidding them to cross to the opposite shore. With what mingled feelings of disappointment at the orders of our Lord, and of regret at His separating Himself from their company, they proceed at once to obey. They do not know how long this separation is to last, for He has given them no instructions to return to Him. So, too, our obedience will often be tried, and after consolation we may be visited with desolation; nay, often it may seem that the commands of Superiors are hard and prejudicial both to body and soul; but let us, like the Apostles, proceed to comply in a spirit of faith and confidence, leaving ourselves in the hands of God. No sooner had they departed, and the multitude started on their homeward journey, than the humble, modest Jesus ascends the neighbouring mountain to pray. How little He thinks of the praise or enthusiasm of the poor people whose hunger He had appeased, or of the glorious miracle which His charity has prompted Him to perform! He seeks only His Father's glory, and although His Human Nature is wearied with excessive labour, He seeks rest and repose in retiring into solitude to give Himself to prayer. O my soul, what a lesson this is for us, who when we do a little for God are inclined to take credit to ourselves, and instead of seeking repose in solitude and prayer, go about in search of compliments and flattery from others, seeking our own glorification; but not the glory of our Heavenly Father.

Point 2.—Christ appears walking on the waters, and the Apostles thought it was an apparition. Let us picture the Apostles as they laboured with their oars

against a strong head wind, which tossed their boat upon the troubled sea. Though for nine hours they had been rowing with all their might, they had hardly made half the passage; they were worn out with fatigue, full of sadness and terror, and struggling for their lives. What a change since the afternoon, when they were in company with our Lord, all happy and active, and distributing the miraculous food to the multitude; but now He is away, their happiness is exchanged for depression, and their whole anxiety is to save themselves from shipwreck. Although they are fresh from witnessing a proof of His Divinity, they are so weak in faith, that they do not think of turning to Him and invoking His help. Whilst we are with Jesus, and all goes on well and prosperously, we are contented; no labour or pains are too great for us to undertake: we are full of fervour; the service of God is so sweet and easy; but let Jesus appear to withdraw Himself from us, let the darkness of spiritual desolation come over us, let the storms of temptation arise, or obedience put our courage or virtue to the test, and how soon we flag in our efforts, how sad and depressed we become, how hard and rough the way of perfection becomes, how difficult it is to turn to God or pray to Him for help! "He rides with ease who is drawn in the chariot of God's grace;"¹ but consolation soon gives place to desolation, and it is then that our virtue is proved, and our faith and confidence are tested. Let us then have recourse to prayer in the solitude of our hearts, and God will hear and pity us, will turn our wailing into joy, surrounding us with gladness.²

Whilst the Apostles were in this state of distress they little thought that our Lord was not only conscious of their sad condition, but had actually so disposed it all, yet so as not to allow them to perish, "For He is

¹ *Imitation*, bk. ii. c. ix.

² *Ibid.*

faithful and will not that they should be tried beyond their strength ;” and again, “The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them.” Let us contemplate Him as He arises from His prayer, peacefully descends from the mountain, and hastens across the water to the relief of His poor Apostles. No sooner do they see Him than they began to cry out with fear, thinking that they beheld some phantom. But Jesus said to them: “Be of good heart; it is I, fear ye not.” So it often happens to those who wish to make progress in God’s service. Jesus will visit them with some trial, temptation, humiliation, desolation, calculated to fill them with terror or dismay; but He quickly converts it into their greater peace, consolation, and joy, whilst, on the contrary, the devil will sometimes inspire confidence, false pleasure, false joy, thereby to lure his dupes into true misery and sin.

Let us then learn to mistrust, and carefully examine the beginning, the progress, and end of consolation, as St. Ignatius counsels us before giving ourselves up to it; and in desolation, let us be of good heart, firm in faith.

Point 3.—“It is I, fear ye not.” St. Peter walking on the water begins to sink. Jesus saves him and reproves him for his little faith. Let us seriously consider the words of our Blessed Lord. After allaying their terror, and bidding them to be of good heart, He says: “It is I.” Oh! if in all our troubles we regarded them as coming from the hand of God, or at all events, as permitted in His sweet providence, but always for our greater sanctification, as holy faith teaches, our hearts would never fail us; but alas! we are wanting like the Apostles in this spirit of practical faith. If when insulted or provoked to anger, if ordered to perform something which is unpleasant or less prudent,

if overtaken by sickness or misfortune, if attacked by temptation or desolation, we in the spirit of faith heard our Lord addressing us and saying, "It is I," how different would be our conduct! how patient, humble, obedient, resigned, and cheerful!

"It is I, fear ye not." It is I, your Lord and Master; then why should we fear, seeing that all things are placed under His power, and that He is so interested in us and in our welfare, that He will not let a hair of our head perish,¹ and so disposes all things, "that if we love Him, humiliations, mortifications, desolations, in short, all things will work together for our good."²

Let us admire the ardour of love in St. Peter, together with his childlike simplicity. He at once recognized the voice and manner of his Master, and yielding to his impulsive nature, in defiance of the angry winds and the wild waves, he asks leave to go to Jesus. He bids him at once to come, as a reward of his confidence, charity, and simplicity, pledging Himself to sustain him as long as his faith and confidence remained firm. But seeing the huge waves and the fierce winds, he became affrighted, his courage failed him, and yielding to fear, he began to sink, and cried to his Master to save him from drowning. What a lesson for us on human weakness and inconstancy, and of the necessity of holy confidence. Let us also learn the duty of earnest prayer when we are tempted, for he that neglects to do so will most surely fall. All temptations arise from self-confidence or from mistrust of God, in some form or other, and are only to be overcome by humility, prayer, and faith in our loving Lord.

Let us contemplate Jesus tenderly reproving Peter for giving way to the temptation of doubt and fear;

¹ St. Luke xxi. 18.

² Romans viii. 28.

and the humility of Peter, who received the reproof of his Master with silent submission and grateful affection. O my soul, let us learn in what spirit we should receive the admonitions of those who are appointed over us. That we should often err is human, but to be told of our faults, and to accept it in a spirit of humility and silence, is Christian. No sooner did Jesus enter the boat, than there came a calm, and the boat was suddenly transported to the shore. It is thus that our trials, temptations, and desolations will vanish when it pleases our good God to remove them, and this He will do when we have done all that is required on our part, and have drawn our Lord back to us by fervent and earnest prayer.

In our colloquy let us beg for patience under our sufferings and trials, and also courage to suffer with our King and Captain. End with "Our Father."

If time or opportunity permits, let there be two contemplations by way of repetition of the two last contemplations, and an application of the senses to the same.

OUR LORD SENDS HIS APOSTLES TO PREACH.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord sends His disciples to preach, communicating to them power to cast out devils and to heal the sick. In doing so He commends to them the exercise of prudence, simplicity, patience, disinterestedness, and poverty, and lays down the method and matter of their discourses.

Prelude 2.—Let us put ourselves amongst the Apostles whilst Jesus is addressing them.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that we may know our dear Lord more intimately, and thus be induced to love Him more ardently, thereby by our word and example to draw others to Him according to our state of life.

Point 1.—Jesus calls His Apostles and gives them power of exorcism and healing. Besides these two powers, the one spiritual the other corporal, St. Matthew adds that Jesus commissioned them to preach, as also to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers. He had taught them all these things by His example, as was written of Him later, "And He went through the cities and towns, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing all sickness and

¹ "These twelve Jesus sent, commanding them saying: Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of Israel. And going preach that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely have you received, freely give. Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide until you go thence. . . . Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues." (St. Matt. x. 5—17.)

infirmities.¹ His compassionate and tender Heart is moved to pity at seeing the harvest ready for the sickle, and Himself the sole workman. He beheld His countrymen lying scattered about like sheep abandoned by their shepherd. The priests and Pharisees were the slaves of luxury and avarice and pride or self-justification; of the lost sheep of Israel they had no care, but despised them. To these poor creatures Jesus sends His Apostles, moved by the sight of their bodily infirmities, but infinitely more by the grievous state of their souls. The words of Jeremias were too truly fulfilled: "The people were wandering about the streets of the city, clamouring for bread, and there was no one to break it to them." To them He gives grace to respond to His call, and inspires them with zeal and charity to do their duty well. They are not to preach themselves, nor to seek themselves in any way, but to give freely what they had gratuitously received, and to draw men to desire to enter into the Kingdom of God, which was about to be established.

Point 2.—They are to be prudent as serpents, yet simple as doves. "Behold I send you," says Jesus Christ. He who is God, the Son of the Most High, the Creator of souls, their Sovereign Lord and Master; He to whom as Man all power is given in Heaven and on earth; He who is about to purchase with His life-blood the redemption of all men; behold it is He who thus formally gives them commission. At the same time His omnipotence will protect them, will assist them, will enable them to do all that He enjoines, if only they respond to His bidding. He sends them like so many sheep into the midst of wolves. The sheep is the symbol of innocence, of gentleness, of meekness, of silence and patience under suffering and death: so must be His Apostles. To innocence of life, they must

¹ St. Matt. xv. 35.

add meekness, and patience, for they are to be thrown into the midst of men who will treat them worse than the ravenous wolf would treat a gentle lamb: "For they will deliver you up in councils, they will scourge you in their synagogues: you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. . . . And you shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake. . . . Fear not then those who kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul into Hell."

Under all this cruel and unjust treatment they are to be silent as the sheep that openeth not its mouth when about to be slaughtered. To this lesson of patience, He adds another, of prudence. They are to mix with men steeped in worldly prudence, and inspired by the devil, the spirit of falsehood, craft, and cunning. With no less prudence they must take advantage of the occasions for preaching, observing what will be best adapted to the persons, to the times and circumstances, and whilst they denounce sin or offence of God, they must treat the sinner with tenderness, charity, and compassion. They are to be "simple as doves." This simplicity recommended by our Lord, is the moral supernatural virtue by which a man refers all he does purely to God's honour and glory, or by which he performs all things with a pure intention; according to that of St. Luke: "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be simple, thy whole body will be lightsome; but if it be evil, thy whole body will be darksome."¹ Therefore our Lord would have His Apostles to seek in all things simply His Father's glory, and this by their sincerity in speech, by the

¹ St. Luke xi. 33.

avoidance of all craft or scheming, of all self-seeking, and by thoroughness and honesty of purpose, as opposed to the unreal principles of the children of this world.

Let us examine how far we have carried out this counsel of Jesus; how often does it happen that we flatter ourselves that we shall advance the interests of God by unreal ostentation, by using language to conceal or misrepresent our views, by confounding the true and the false, by doing good for worldly gain under pretext of religion? If we are truly simple, we shall sooner suffer than do harm, we shall bear no resentment for injuries, we shall count as gain any contumely in the cause of truth. Let us beg earnestly for this holy simplicity, which is so dear to the Heart of our Blessed Lord, for "with the simple is His conversation,"¹ which is so directly opposed to the insincerity of the children of this world, and yet is so highly appreciated by them that it wins their respect and confidence.

Point 3.—Further counsels of Jesus. In the first place He bids them not to wish for gold or silver, but to cultivate poverty in spirit, and as far as may be, also in effect; for this voluntary renunciation paves the way to true humility; He would have them renounce all that is not absolutely necessary, thereby practically throwing themselves on the providence of God, cutting off all earthly attachments or solicitude, and furnishing an example to mankind of sobriety, contempt for wealth, simplicity, and holiness. How often alas! do we find even those called to the apostolic life, or consecrated to God in religious life, wedded to their own comforts or conveniences, less manly, more effeminate, and less mortified than those who have been born in plenty and nurtured in luxury!

¹ Prov. iii. 32.

May we not too often and with too much truth account for the comparatively little fruit produced in souls now-a-days by this want of the true spirit of poverty and love of hardship?

In the next place, they are to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, that God is about to pour out His graces through the teaching, example, Passion and Death of our Lord, upon mankind, whereby the Kingdom of God will be established in their souls in this life, to be followed in the next by the eternal possession of Him.

End with colloquy and "Our Father."

OUR LORD FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall to mind how the Apostles asked our Lord to dismiss the people to their homes, as evening was coming on, and they had been fasting all the day in the desert; how He ordered the few loaves to be brought to Him, blessed them, and handed them to the Apostles, who distributed them to the people; how when all had taken their fill, there remained twelve baskets full of what remained over.

¹ "And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him saying: It is evening; this is a desert place, and the hour is now past; send away the multitudes, that going into the town, they may buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said to them: They have no need to go, give you them to eat. They answered Him: We have not here but five loaves and two fishes. And when He had commanded the multitudes to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat and were filled. And they took what remained, twelve full baskets of fragments. And the number of them that did eat was five thousand men, besides women and children." (St. Matt. xiv. 15—20.)

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present and observing the scene.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we desire, which is to know our Lord more and more perfectly as He presents Himself to us in this mystery, that we may love Him more fervently and follow Him more faithfully.

Point 1.—Let us consider how our Lord had aroused great enthusiasm in all the neighbourhood west of the Sea of Galilee, by His miracles, preaching, and Divine holiness, and the inhabitants of the towns and villages came out to hear and see Him; but He crossed over the sea, to fly from their applause, praise, and admiration, and to refresh His Soul in solitude and communion with His Heavenly Father. From this we learn what should be the conduct of those who desire to work for God: they must fly from the praise and admiration of men; they must love solitude, and devote themselves to prayer. It is only in this way that they can hope for the help of God, without which all their labour will be in vain. “Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.”¹

But early on the following morning the people arrived on foot at the place where our Lord was engaged in prayer. Let us see the tender Heart of Jesus, as He looks upon these thousands of poor simple people, wearied with their long journey, and all anxious to hear Him; the priests and scribes are too much taken up with themselves or with the great and wealthy to attend to these poor sheep, who are thus left without a shepherd. It was to preach to such as these that He was sent, to heal the contrite of heart, to collect together the lost sheep of Israel.

Throughout the day He prolonged His discourse to them, and only rested to heal any that were sick, until at length the Apostles intervened. The crowd

¹ Psalm cxxvi. 1.

was hungry, they had a long way to go, and evening was coming on apace; they should be at once dismissed. Jesus knew what He was about to do, and when Andrew had found a boy who had five barley loaves and two fishes, Jesus ordered them to be brought to Him. Let us admire the poverty of our Lord and His Apostles, who for all emergencies were possessed only of about six pounds; He who was the Lord and Master of the world, had this sum of money for Himself and His followers, and those that came after Him to hear Him, were all equally destitute. Let us compare our love of poverty with His, and our practice of poverty with that of our King.

Point 2.—Jesus blessed the loaves and gave them to the multitude. Let us contemplate the Apostles, who according to the instructions of our Lord, arranged the multitude in groups of one hundred or of fifty; then bade them be seated upon the grass: with what simple faith all do as they are told. They had come to hear Jesus, they were seeking the Kingdom of God, the Lord will look to the rest. “Do not seek what ye shall eat or drink, or wherewith ye shall be clothed: for your Father knoweth that ye stand in need of these: but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹

As this same Son of God causes the few grains of corn sown by the husbandman to produce a thousand-fold in the harvest-time, so in the hands of the Apostles does He multiply the loaves to feed His poor people in the desert. Oh! let us blush for shame to think of our little faith and confidence in our Blessed Lord, whose love and power are at least as great in our regard as they were in regard of these poor Jews. But this stupendous miracle is only a figure of an infinitely higher and more sublime multiplication, a symbol and

¹ St. Luke xii. 29.

prelude of that mystery of mysteries in which Christ our Lord, the true Bread that came down from Heaven, multiplies Himself throughout the world, and for all time. "From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, there shall be offered up a clean oblation, and My Name shall be great among the Gentile nations:" and this His Flesh and Blood is distributed to us through the hands of those who are the successors of the Apostles. Oh! the astounding mystery of love, the great mystery of faith!

Point 3.—They eat and had their fill, and there remained twelve baskets full. Let us try to picture to ourselves the wonder mixed with awe, together with the intense joy of the men, women, and children, as they each received their food. With what feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving they would have partaken of it, especially as we may suppose that it was not merely multiplied in quantity, but was also miraculously transformed in its taste also, and in its pleasant effects. So too is it with that other Bread of which this was only the symbol. *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali, sorte tamen inæquali: mors est malis vita bonis, vide pari sumptione quam sit dispar exitus.* The end which Jesus had in view was attained. He sought not His own glory, nor the empty applause and esteem of man; His desire was that they should believe in Him, and in His Divinity. So it happened, for the multitude cried aloud that "He is the Prophet who has come into the world." Nay, their excitement and enthusiasm were wrought up to such a pitch that they would have carried Him off by force and proclaimed Him their King, had He not in His profound humility absconded and disappeared alone on the mountain. When they would humble Him, insult Him, He comes boldly to confront His countrymen, but when they would pay Him honour, He flies from them. Here again I see the consistence of my King.

and Captain. Oh! how different is my conduct, how opposite to His! and yet how often have I pledged myself to answer to His call, to embrace His standard.

Make a fervent colloquy to Jesus, and say the *Anima Christi*. End with "Our Father."

THE TRANSFIGURATION.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The history of this mystery is that Christ our Lord took the three specially chosen Apostles, Peter, James, and John, on to the top of a mountain, probably Mount Thabor, where He was transfigured. Whilst He was thus revealing His glory, He conversed with Moses and Elias on His coming Passion; and the voice of His Father proclaimed from the heavens, "This is My beloved Son."

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit ascend this mountain and humbly observe all that is recounted in this mystery.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg a more lively appreciation of our dear Lord as He is both God and Man, that we may come to love Him more perfectly, and may be

¹ "And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias speaking with Him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo! a voice out of the cloud saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them; and said to them, Arise and fear not. And they lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus. And Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead." (St. Matt. xvii. 1—9.)

encouraged to follow Him more closely in the spirit of humility and self-sacrifice.

Point 1.—Christ our Lord is transfigured. About eight days after Peter's confession of our Lord's Divinity, says St. Luke, He took Peter and James and John, and went up into a mountain to pray. How mysterious is the distribution of God's graces and favours! to one He gives five talents, to another two, to another one: in like manner is it with the providence of God in the assignment or permission of trials and sufferings. These three Apostles were to be the witnesses of the terrible Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, of the apparent abandonment of Jesus by His Father; therefore are they favoured with this signal grace of witnessing His Transfiguration. It is thus that God proportions His graces to our trials, that we may be able to bear them: and according to the measure of His favours we must expect to be the number of our trials and sufferings. He goes with them to the mountain to pray: thereby impressing upon us that if we go to pray, we must retire as far as possible from the haunts and converse of men, to some solitary place, where we may be alone with God, leaving the distractions of life behind us. It is in solitude that God loves to speak to our hearts, to impart His light to our souls, by which we may see Him more clearly; it is in silent prayer that our souls are raised above all created things and are led to look down on them, to despise them; it is in prayer that we acquire strength to bear our trials, and become more closely united with God. And when we go to prayer, let us take with us the simplicity and earnestness of Peter, the rigid sense of duty of James, and the tender ardent love of John. Let us next contemplate how, whilst they are absorbed in prayer, the face of our Lord gradually begins to shine, like the sun when it is breaking through the

clouds, until at last it blazes in all its brightness, and His garments become like snow sparkling in the bright sunshine. At first the Apostles, who were wearied and overpowered with sleep, did not see the strange transformation until they were awakened by the dazzling light. So too does it often happen to us. At times when the feeling of faith seems dead, or when we are drowsy or lethargic in prayer or meditation, we do not recognize the wonderful transformation of our Lord in the Holy Mass or in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. But why does our Lord thus transfigure Himself? It may be, that He may show to His Apostles how He conceals His Divine Nature under the outward form of Humanity; or perhaps that when they shall witness His Agony in the Garden, or shall look upon Him dying on a Cross amidst the insults of the crowd, their faith in Him may not be shaken; or perhaps it was to inspire them and us with hope and courage in bearing the sufferings, persecutions, and trials of this life for His sake, by the foresight of the glory with which they shall be rewarded; for it is written, "Yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."¹ Let us picture the amazement and awe of the Apostles at the sight! with what ecstasies of joy and love were they inflamed to see their humble Master so honoured and glorified. But, O my soul, how far more should we rejoice, how far greater should be our love of that same Master so transfigured for us, as to become not only an object of our veneration and admiration, but to be our very food! yet alas! how coldly and with what strange indifference do we look upon Him in the Holy Sacrament! notwithstanding that true principle of St. Bernard: *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior.*

Point 2.—He was conversing with Moses and Elias.

¹ Romans viii. 17.

Here let us in spirit listen to the subject of their conversation. The soul of the Jewish lawgiver had been summoned by Jesus from Limbo, had resumed its body, and now reflected the bright glory of our Lord; in like manner did Elias appear from the place where, until the appointed time, he is destined to be immuned from the attacks of death: both, the one as representative of the Law, the other representing the Prophets, are there bearing witness to His Messiahship. Let us contemplate them as they prostrate themselves with great reverence and adore the Son of God; with what admiration they regard their loving Saviour, and with what intense love they are inflamed; the Apostles too rapt in ecstasy, at beholding the majesty and glory of these types and witnesses of their Master, in earnest converse with Him. Let us listen to their words: "And they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem,"¹ by which is shown how dear to our Lord was that Passion and Death which through His love for us He was to undergo, even in the midst of His temporary glorification. Let us learn from this that even in the hours of consolation we should not forget that we must be ready for trials and sufferings, and must in those times pluck up courage to bear the Cross with our dear Lord. Life, which is short, is the time of suffering and strife; eternity is long, for rejoicing and celebration of victory.

Point 3.—"This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." Let us contemplate Peter, who, with His usual simple, ingenuous, affectionate, and impulsive disposition, suggests to our Lord that, if it be His good pleasure, he and James and John will build dwellings for the Master, Moses, and Elias! As if they stood in need of tabernacles, or as though our Lord would leave the rest of His Apostles and interrupt the work which He had

¹ St. Luke ix. 31.

come to do, or would forego the trials and tribulations of this life to indulge in pleasure and happiness. Truly the Evangelist observes of him, "He knew not what he was saying." He had yet to learn that glory is only to be earned by the Cross: "It behoveth Christ to suffer, and so to enter into glory." At present he was not dead to self, he knew not in what his real interest consisted, but he will know later, when he will write: "But if you partake of the suffering of Christ, rejoice that when His glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."¹ Oh! if one single sight of the glorified Body of Jesus made him forget all earthly things, what will it be to see God Himself face to face and to enjoy the eternal possession of the Divinity: if one drop of Heaven's happiness so transformed him, what will it be when we plunge into the ocean of heavenly bliss and glory? Our Blessed Lord does not answer, but instead, "a bright cloud overshadowed them; and they were afraid when they entered into the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, hear Him."² They were appalled at this fresh manifestation of Divine power and majesty, and awe-struck, though full of heavenly joy and consolation on account of this fresh glory of their Master. John, indeed, had already witnessed something similar, when present at the Baptism of our Lord. For there, too, the voice of the Eternal Father made itself heard, and in the same terms gave testimony of the Divinity of His Son, whilst the Holy Spirit appeared under the figure of a dove, instead of, as here, in the bright cloud. He is the beloved inasmuch as He is the most perfect image of the Father, and in Him and by Him alone does the Father love us. Him must we hear, His teaching we are bound to accept without doubting and to reduce to practice, His example we

¹ 1 St. Peter iv. 13.² St. Luke ix. 34.

are bound to imitate, as it is written: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren."¹ Let us see our Lord as He comes and touches His Apostles, who had fallen down in terror at the voice of God, and bids them to rise and not to be afraid; thereby inspiring them with confidence and peace.

And rising up, they saw nobody but Jesus, whose glory was again hidden, and He appeared as usual, as if nothing had happened. And so the glory of the Transfiguration was ended. Let us learn from this, not to look for or expect in this life many or long enduring spiritual consolations. If it please God to grant them, let us, as St. Ignatius tells us, and as we learn from this contemplation, think during them of the times of desolation and sufferings which will succeed them, and thus arm ourselves with courage to meet them.

On their way down from the mountain, let us reflect on the counsels given by our Lord, that they were not to mention what they had seen or heard until after His Resurrection, and let us take from them a lesson of humility, of prudence, by cutting off occasions of envy or jealousy on the part of others, and of concealing from others the gifts or graces which we have received from God, unless God's glory, the salvation of souls, or obedience may require otherwise.

In the colloquy let us beg of Jesus to give us strength to follow Him in self-abjection and suffering now, that so at death we may merit to be transfigured with Him in glory. End with "Our Father."

As usual, if time and opportunity allow, it will be well to make repetition of the two last meditations, and an application of the senses.

¹ Romans viii. 29.

ON THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Christ by messengers heard that His friend Lazarus was at the point of death at Bethania. After a lapse of two days, He informed His Apostles that Lazarus was dead, and He went with them to the home of Martha and Mary to raise him to life again. He went to the grave, wept, and summoned the dead man to life.

¹ " Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary, and of Martha her sister. . . . His sisters therefore sent to Him saying : Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick. . . . When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days. . . . And after that He said to them : Lazarus our friend sleepeth ; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. . . . Then Jesus said to them plainly : Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe : but let us go to him. . . . Jesus therefore came and found that he had been already four days in the grave. And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha therefore as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him ; but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus : Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. Jesus saith to her : Thy brother shall rise again. . . . I am the Resurrection and the Life : he that believeth in Me, although he be dead shall live. Believeth thou this? She said to Him : Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. . . . When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing Him she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him : Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus groaned in spirit and troubled Himself. . . . And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said : Behold how He loved him. Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over it. . . . They took therefore the stone away, and Jesus lifting up His eyes said : Father, I give Thee thanks, &c. . . . that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound feet and hands with winding bands. . . . Jesus saith to them : Loose him and let him go." (St. John xi. 1-44.)

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the way to Bethania from the Jordan, the house of Lazarus, and the sepulchre in which he was laid.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly that we may know more intimately the goodness, mercy, and tender love of the Heart of our Blessed Lord, may thereby be inflamed with more ardent love for Him, and may imitate His example in the exercise of these virtues.

Point 1.—Martha and Mary send word to Jesus, and two days later He starts to visit them. In the first place, let us admire the gratitude of our Lord, and His generosity for the smallest favours done to Him. Mary had anointed Him and had wiped His feet with her hair, says St. John, and Martha had ministered to His few wants, which His generous Heart yearns to repay, even at the risk of falling into the hands of His cruel persecutors, and with the full consciousness that it would speed the hour of His death. Again we see by the terms of their message how well the sisters knew the tender and merciful disposition of the Sacred Heart. They do not ask Him to come to them; it is enough for them merely to notify to Him the cause of their sorrow, and to leave the rest to Him. He already knew of course the state of His friend, but would give us a lesson not to act on the impulse of our natural feelings, and also would put the faith and confidence which His friends reposed in Him to the test, and therefore He delayed to go to their assistance for two whole days. By this He also would provide an occasion for proving to the Jews His Divinity by restoring Lazarus to life in their very presence, and also for intensifying the joy of the sorrowing sisters. In vain His Apostles urge Him not to go; they remind Him that Lazarus is dead, that the Jews were on the look-out to arrest Him, in order to stone Him to death. He persists in His resolution, and declares that He is

glad to go for their sakes. So we often are inclined to wonder and perhaps to repine at the apparent indifference of God or His representatives to prevent or to sympathize with us in our trials or sorrows, little thinking, through our lack of faith, that it is perhaps for God's greater glory and for our future joy and glory.

Point 2.—Jesus requires profession of faith before exercising His power. The mourners were assembled in the house of Lazarus, when our Lord drew near to Bethania. As soon as Martha heard of it, she at once went forth to meet Him, and forgot, in her delight to see Jesus, to notify it to her sister. When she met Him she only said: "If Thou hadst been with us my brother would not have died;" by this she acknowledged His power and His love, but thought not of His Divinity, nor of His omniscience, nor His omnipotence, although she declared her confidence that if He should vouchsafe to ask God for her brother's life, He will be heard. Let us admire this simplicity, confidence, and love on the part of Martha! She knew, she said, that Lazarus would rise again on the last day. Then Jesus instructs her in regard to His Divinity; He is not a prophet to pray to God, but God Himself, "the Resurrection and the Life, the author of both; whoever believeth in Him after this mortal life is over shall enjoy life eternal; and whoever in this life believeth in Him shall live for ever." After she made profession of her belief in all this, and by His grace declared that she firmly believed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, who had come into this world, she hastened to her sister and quietly informed her of the presence of Jesus, who was waiting for her. Let us picture the intense joy of the penitent and loving soul of Mary; how promptly and calmly she withdraws from the company of the mourners in

order to go to Him whom her soul loveth. Let us follow with the mourners, who thought that she was going to the grave to shed tears over the remains of her brother. With what profound reverence she casts herself at the feet of her Lord, and with a heart broken with grief and inflamed with charity she pitifully said, "O Lord, if you had been here my brother would never have died." She could say no more. When Jesus saw her fast falling tears, His Heart became sad and distressed, and He *groaned* in spirit; for He saw what anguish sin had brought upon mankind, even upon those that were most dear to Him: He saw too those wretched Scribes and Pharisees, for whose sake He had left Lazarus to die, that by raising him to life again He might force them to acknowledge His Divinity; and moreover He knew how they would turn this grace against themselves by making it a cause of hurrying on His death. Well might Jesus groan, and His Soul be troubled as in spirit He reviewed the horrid crimes which the Chief Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and His own misguided countrymen would shortly perpetrate: yet all this would not prevent Him from heroically signing His death-warrant by restoring the dead Lazarus to life. He asked therefore to be taken to his grave. As they approached it, His tears began to fall, and the crowd seeing it said, "Look how He loved him." Oh! my poor soul, with how much more reason may we say, Behold how He loves us. Not with warm tears, but with tears of blood, with the last drops of His Blood mingled with water, He has shown that love; and beyond the grave it has continued, and still is as strong as ever; nay, with more than mother's love He gives us Himself for our food, and the whole of His most precious Blood to drink, not once, but as often as we wish! What can we, what shall we do in return? Alas! how mean and contemptible is the

sacrifice which we have resolved to make in order to prove our gratitude and love in return: and yet Jesus is willing to accept of it.

Point 3.—Jesus weeps, and prays, and commands Lazarus to come forth. In order to take away all chance of calling in question the fact of the miracle, Jesus bids them to remove the stone from the grave; He allows Martha to object out of delicacy lest by the sight or smell of the decomposing body the senses of her Lord might be offended. Then His tears falling fast, He prays to His Father, and declares His reason publicly for working this miracle, that they who witness it may believe that He is the true Messiah, and “in a loud voice,” in the capacity of Lord and Master of life and death, He utters His command, “Lazarus come forth.” On the word he came forth, and they unbound the cloths from his legs and arms.

Let us contemplate the scene: the awe and dismay of the crowd, the gratitude, love, and rapture of the sisters, the reverence, adoration, and thanksgiving of Lazarus; but, above all, the feelings which swelled the Heart of our dear Jesus! Some indeed of the standers-by believed; but oh! strange perversity of the human heart when the slave of unbridled passions! others made their way to Jerusalem to tell what they had seen to the council of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, who from that day devised means how to put Him to death.

Make a fervent colloquy to our dear Lord. End with “Our Father.”

ON THE SUPPER IN BETHANIA.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—When Christ was at supper together with His Apostles in the house of Simon, whom He had healed of leprosy, Mary Magdalene poured precious ointment on His Head. Judas broke forth into murmurs and complaints at such waste, but Jesus, on the other hand, applauded her for what she had done.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit be present in the supper-room and observe the guests.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg again greater knowledge and love of our Blessed Lord, that we may ever try to imitate Him more perfectly, especially in holy patience, forbearance, and true charity.

Point 1.—Our Lord sups together with Lazarus in the house of Simon. The evening before Palm Sunday, Jesus was invited to sup with Simon of Bethania, who was surnamed the leper, probably because Jesus had cured him of that disease. Perhaps he is the same person who two years before had enter-

¹ "But when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to Him a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on His Head, as He was at table. And the disciples seeing it had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For she in pouring in this ointment hath done it for My burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her." (St. Matt. xxvi. 6—13.)

"Mary therefore took a pound of ointment, of right spikenard of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. . . . Judas Iscariot said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor: but because he was a thief." (St. John xii. 1—5.)

tained our Lord, when a Pharisee, and whom with all charity He had reproved on account of his interior condemnation of the same Magdalene. He was now one of the principle inhabitants of Bethania, and was much attached to our Lord. In order to celebrate the great event of the resurrection of Lazarus, and out of gratitude for his own restoration to health, he wished to give a banquet to Jesus, the Apostles, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and some other of his friends. Martha, her sister, and the other women served at the feast as usual. Let us contemplate the reverence and joy with which the fervent convert Simon entertains his Lord; the disciples all delighted at the homage paid to Him; Martha full of reverence, humility, gladness, and love, attending to the wants of all; Lazarus amiable, gentle, grave, and grateful, fresh recalled from the home of his eternity; but most of all Christ our Lord, with His mind fixed on Heaven, as betrayed by His celestial countenance, obsequious, gracious, with humble and natural gravity, and exceedingly amiable. Let us admire His modesty in word and manner, His peaceful majesty. Oh! what a magnificent model is here presented to us for our imitation! How far are we, notwithstanding all the graces that we have received, from our grand original.

Point 2.—On this occasion Simon could not have neglected his duty as he had done on the previous occasion, and consequently there was no need for Magdalene to wash His feet either with water or with her tears; nor would he have failed to anoint his guests with unguents, yet we may contemplate her, now a welcome and invited guest, coming forward “with an alabaster box containing a pound of ointment of right spikenard of great price. She anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and poured ointment on His Head, and the house was filled with

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the odour of the ointment." She thus wished to testify her belief in His Divinity, as well as in His Human Nature. Let us admire her modesty, reverence, and devotion, in paying to Him this tribute of her love. She has given up all things in the world; all earthly affections have been long since banished from her heart; her one desire is to love her God and Lord, to do and suffer and die with Him and for Him. What a lesson for us, who have been forgiven not once, but times without number, who have been permitted so often to receive Him in Holy Communion, who have been specially favoured with graces innumerable; and yet alas! what sacrifices have we made to prove the reality of our conversion, what proofs have we given, or are we giving, of our forgetfulness of self, of our detachment from all things earthly? In the election which we have made, what sign have we given of the firmness of purpose with which we are resolved to adhere to it? Let us blush with shame as we compare our half-earnestness with the uncompromising thoroughness of the penitent Magdalene. Let us consider too the Heart of our dear Lord, who will not be outdone in generosity, and how abundant must have been the graces with which He must have rewarded her sacrifice, and let us remember that we poor sinners shall meet with equal generosity if, like Magdalene, we approach Him in the same humble, sorrowing, loving, and generous dispositions.

Point 3.—Judas murmurs, Jesus approves. Judas, who was a traitor and a thief, says St. John, began to complain at the reckless prodigality of Magdalene, who might have sold the ointment and given the proceeds to the poor, and at first led some of the others with him. It was not any special love for the poor that prompted him, but because he held the common purse, and carried the things that were put therein. How the

part of poor Magdalene must have bled to hear one of our Lord's own disciples speaking thus. If it had come from one of His foes she might have disregarded it, but not from an Apostle. Let us see, too, what evil can be done by one who by his superior craft and hypocritical reasoning is capable of perverting the simplicity of others. They little knew that Judas was already the slave of avarice, and by-and-bye would sell his Lord for gold. This should teach us to weigh well the words of those who, under the semblance of virtue, would denounce that which in itself is good, and to beware of being carried away by the words of false doctrine. Alas! how many now-a-days in their simplicity allow themselves to be influenced by the false principles laid down by men of the world, or by those who pose as men of science and of sound sense, though in their lives they do violence to both.

Then Jesus said: "Why do you molest this woman? leave her alone. She hath wrought a good work on Me." By this He let them see that He knew their thoughts, and wished to justify His servant. She had only anointed Him a little before the time, in anticipation of His Death that day week; she had given them, Apostles though they were, a lesson of detachment, sacrifice, and love. Our Lord would bear most patiently the insult to Himself in these murmurs and dissatisfaction, even though it came from those so near and dear to Him, but He will not tolerate it in regard to His faithful servant. Nay more, He proclaimed to them, and His proclamation is verified to the letter, that wherever His Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, what she did for Him in anointing Him should be also told in memory of her. Here again let us admire the generosity of our dear Lord. He is loyal and true to those who are His friends—*Fidelis Deus*.

Let us make a fervent colloquy to our Blessed Lord, and end with "Our Father."

The last two contemplations may be repeated with great profit, and be followed with an application of the senses, as usual.

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Christ sends two Apostles to bring to Him an ass and her foal. The Apostles accompany Him as He goes towards the city mounted upon the ass; and as He drew nigh crowds came out to meet Him, and spread out clothes and palm branches on the road, and cried out, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Prelude 2.—We may imagine the road by Bethphage, and the slopes of Olivet over the Cedron into the city.

¹ "Then Jesus sent two of His disciples, saying to them: Go into the village that is over against you, and you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go. . . . And the disciples did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before and followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." (St. Matt. xxi. 1—9.)

"And it came to pass when He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethania unto the mount called Olivet, He sent two of His disciples. . . . And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said to them, Why loose you the colt? But they said because the Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus. And casting their garments on the colt, they set Jesus thereon. And as they went they spread their clothes in the way. . . . and the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in Heaven and glory on high. And when He drew near, seeing the city He wept over it." (St. Luke xix. 29—41.)

Prelude. 3.—Let us beg what we wish, namely, to know our Lord in this mystery, that we may thereby love Him the more and may be stimulated to a closer imitation of Him.

Point 1.—Our Lord sends for the ass and colt. The reason which prompted our Lord to make this strange triumphal entry into Jerusalem, was not a desire of worldly honour, or of the praise or esteem of men, for He knew how fickle and inconstant it is, and would be in His regard, seeing that in a few days their triumphant greeting would be changed into the cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him." No, He would fulfil the prophecy of Zachary: "Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy King cometh to thee, the Just and Saviour: He is poor and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass,"¹ and by this would prove that He was the Messiah, the Son of David, so that if they refused to believe in Him, they would be inexcusable. Moreover, He would also show them that His was no temporal sovereignty or earthly greatness, but a spiritual kingship over the souls of men. Earthly monarchs enter upon their royalty amid displays of pomp and stately pageantry; not so our Lord and King, who enters the royal city poor and lowly, meek and gentle, seated on an ignoble beast, with a handful of uncouth fishermen for His retinue, and a crowd of poor men and boys to welcome Him, waving the branches of palm or olive to do Him reverence. All this homage, too, was paid voluntarily, spontaneously, and without any bribery or previous concert or agreement.

Our Lord gave also various proofs of His Divinity, for besides fulfilling the inspired prophecy of Zachary, He knew that the Apostles were to find the ass and her foal as He directed, He asserted His absolute dominion over all creatures by ordering the animals to be brought

¹ Zach. ix. 9.

to Him. Let us admire the simplicity and blind obedience of the Apostles, who unhesitatingly carried out their instructions. With what spirit do we carry out the orders of those whom God has placed over us? Is it one of unquestioning simplicity, or do we examine and criticise those orders, make objections or difficulties, on the ground of health or incompetence, &c., and then when we have bent the Superior's will to our own, flatter ourselves that we are obedient, and murmur or complain if success does not attend upon us. It is not such obedience that will speak victories.

Point 2.—He rides the ass, which the Apostles had covered with their garments. Let us contemplate our King, the King of the universe and of the ages, seated upon an ass, whose trappings were the worn-out garments of some of His Apostles. How perfectly harmonious and consistent is the picture. The humility, simplicity, and poverty of Jesus would ill accord with any vain show, even though it were under the pretext of God's glory, or to uphold His own dignity: it would be a contradiction of all that He had always taught by word and example concerning the excellence, beauty, and necessity of the virtue of humility. Moreover, true genuine worth and nobility are attached to the practice of this virtue by all men of sound judgment: true merit does not stand in need of outward show or grand display, which are the outward trappings employed by conscious undesert to hide hollow pretension. How well all the greatest saints have learnt and practically understood this lesson given us by our Lord. Hence those who have signalized themselves in saving souls have been men who sincerely loved abjection, self-abasement, and humiliation. Let us admire the meekness, sweetness, and amiability of our humble Saviour, by which the multitude is attracted to Him. The great ones of this world flatter themselves that they promote

their authority and influence by a cold, stiff, and haughty manner, whereas it is by an unassuming and humble demeanour that real confidence, reverence, and love are to be won. Let us then earnestly beg of Jesus to grant us this grace, that we may learn of Him to be truly meek and humble of heart. Let us also contemplate the affectionate devotedness of the Apostles, and with what joy they take off their outside garments and arrange them on the back of the ass to form a seat for their beloved Lord. Though they were poor and well worn, still our Lord was well pleased, for they were the best which His poor disciples had to give, and He estimates the disposition of the giver, not the thing given, as we know from the widow's mite, when she offered it, it was all she possessed, in the Temple.

Point 3.—The people spread their garments on the road, &c., and hail Him as the Son of David. Let us contemplate the persons who make up the crowd; they are poor, simple men and boys, who have heard of the wonderful works of Jesus, and especially of His raising Lazarus from the dead; and they are carried away by enthusiasm at seeing His kind, gentle, and modest bearing: there are some Pharisees, too, proud, incredulous, inveterate foes, full of contempt for the low people and of hatred for Jesus: there are the Apostles, with hearts filled with mixed feelings of joy and fear, wondering how all this is to end.

Let us listen to the triumphant shouts of greeting and of blessing that fill the air: "Hosanna to the Son of David," "God save the Son of David, God save the Messiah." How little they thought what would happen within the next five days. Their cry would be changed into, "Away with Him, crucify Him;" and His triumph would be succeeded by a cruel and ignominious death upon the Cross. From this let us at last learn what value to attach to the praise or esteem of men, to

worldly honour or glory. It is short-lived as the flower, fickle as the ever-changing wind. All this our Jesus knew, and His outward calm but ill-concealed the pangs of His Blessed Heart at the blindness, sinfulness, and infidelity of the inhabitants of Jerusalem for whom He was going to lay down His life, at the thought of the terrible destruction that would shortly befall that doomed city, and the fearful massacre or captivity of those for whom He laboured and suffered in vain.

“Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Yes, truly blessed by the Father who sent Him to give peace and blessing to mankind; blessed in Himself as the Eternal Son of God; blessed in His Human Nature, which was full of all perfections; blessed in His Incarnation, coming amongst us to bring us tidings of peace and of all good things; blessed, indeed, for through Him, by Him alone, have all blessings been conferred upon mankind in time and in eternity.

Let us make a colloquy to our Blessed Lord, asking Him to give us grace to follow Him now on His progress to Calvary, to bless us with courage and fortitude amidst the trials which await us. Say the *Anima Christi*. End with “Our Father.”

ON THE PREACHING IN THE TEMPLE.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—St. Luke tells us that Jesus proceeded straight to the Temple on entering the city, and going in, He began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought, saying to them: It is written, My house is a house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the Temple: and all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Prelude 2.—Let us in imagination take up our position in the Temple court.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we desire, which is a more perfect knowledge and love of our Blessed Lord, our King and Leader, that we may be ever faithful to His teaching and example.

Point 1.—Jesus enters the Temple, &c. Let us accompany our Lord as He passes with the crowd through the streets until He approaches the Temple. Whither else was He to go? He was acclaimed as King, and as “such was He appointed by His Father over Sion His holy mountain.”² Rightly then He goes to His own palace; He is the one great High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech,³ hence the Temple is the befitting place for Him; He is God, and justly then did He go to the Temple consecrated to His worship, to drive from thence those who sacri-

¹ “And entering into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written, My house is a house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the Temple. And the Chief Priests, and the scribes, and the rulers of the people, sought to destroy Him. For all the people were very attentive to hear Him.” (St. Luke xix. 45–48.)

² Psalm ii. 6.

³ Psalm cix. 4.

legiously were profaning it. We may behold Him inflamed with holy zeal for this house of God;¹ full of Divine wrath; with more than human majesty and power depicted on His countenance, as He gazes on the noisy, jostling crowd of traders who were profaning the sacred place; on fire with holy indignation at the perfidious Scribes and Pharisees, slaves of avarice, robbery, and hypocrisy, who, caring nothing for the welfare of the poor, imposed heavy burdens on them by their extortions. Let us contemplate Him boldly rebuking them for their crime in turning *His* house, which was destined for a house of prayer, into a den of thieves and rogues. He takes up the cause of the poor, and denounces the wretched guardians of the Temple, who through love of gold and to increase the means of self-indulgence are willing to sacrifice the due honour and worship of God. From this let us learn to beware of a desire for riches, which is the fruitful source of many miseries. Let us learn to love poverty, and as far as is consistent with our state to make this love practical, by the exercise of it in our daily lives. "The desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows."² This we see in the history of the Church, not only by the prevarications of some of its teachers, but also by the loss of fervour in those consecrated to God in Religion and by the consequent necessity of reformation or at times of dismembership. "For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition."³ Hence also arise desires of comforts, conveniences, and imaginary necessities as to food, clothing, accommodation, recreation, and such

¹ Psalm lxxviii 10.

² 1 Timothy vi. 10.

³ 1 Timothy vi. 9.

things, which are quite inconsistent not only with religious life, but with the sacred ministry. They that seek after the commodities of life, fly from labour, spend their days in trifles, shirk all that is disagreeable; and men seeing this, lose all respect for or confidence in them, to the great ruin of souls. Whereas those who in their dress, food, and manner of life are lovers of poverty, excite admiration, confidence, and love, and win great influence over the souls of their fellow-men.

Point 2.—He was teaching daily in the Temple. The Heart of Jesus yearned for the promotion of His Father's glory, for the establishment of His Kingdom in the souls of men, and for their eternal salvation; the spirit of zeal and charity penetrated Him through and through: it gave Him no rest during the day, it caused Him to spend the hours of night in prayer. With the early morning He presented Himself in the courts of the Temple, where the people collected round Him and He gave them instruction. His teaching was as simple as it was divine. He made no use of the flowers of rhetoric nor of the devices of oratory, but inculcated moral duties and dogmatic truth with that simplicity, gravity, and clearness which was calculated to influence the soul rather than gratify the curiosity or flatter the senses of His audience, by indulging in oratorical vanity.

By this our Lord would give a lesson to those who, under the pretext of preaching His Word, preach their own, seeking themselves and not the interests of Jesus Christ, to the detriment of their own and their neighbour's souls. How different from the Apostle who says of himself, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ,

and Him crucified;"¹ and again, "For Christ we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us."² In these passages he lays down the subject-matter of our teaching, and at the same time the manner in which it is to be imparted, that is to say, after the manner of Christ. Let us beware, as St. John Chrysostom counsels, of turning our preaching into an occasion of sacrilege, "adulterating the Word of God."³ Let us convince ourselves that the more intimately we know Jesus, the more intensely we love Him, the greater will be our influence in teaching and in drawing souls to love and imitate Him. Jesus "taught every day," throughout the day: His love for the souls of men and for the glory of His Father ever impelling Him to it. This spirit animated His Apostle: "For if I preach the Gospel it is no glory to me: for a necessity lieth upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel;"⁴ but this is quite impossible to one who spends his time in balancing or rounding off sounding periods, and amassing together flowers of rhetoric to evoke admiration and please the eyes and ears of his listeners. Let us then avoid in our teaching all vanity, levity, arrogance, affectation, far-fetched nicety of expression, angry denunciation or scurrility, all of which ill beseem one who is an ambassador of Christ, and "by whom Christ Himself exhorteth."

Point 3.—When He finished preaching He returned to Bethania. The Evangelist, St. Luke, tells us that He preached during the day, but at night He went out of the city, and St. Matthew tells us that He went to Bethania. Though the people gathered round Him from the early morning to listen to Him, though they had triumphantly welcomed Him into the city, yet there was no one who proffered Him hospitality, but

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 3, 2.

² 2 Cor. v. 20.

³ 2 Cor. ii. 17.

⁴ 1 Cor. ix. 16.

He must go and pass the night on Mount Olivet or must go for shelter all the way to the house of Lazarus in Bethania: nor was there any one to break bread with Him. Let us learn a lesson how to value the applause of men and the acclamation of the crowd; let us learn, too, the selfishness, ingratitude, and thoughtlessness of the world, which will allow us to labour and wear ourselves out for its benefit, but often will not so much as give us shelter or food to appease our hunger. Let us then rejoice to be found worthy to share in this treatment which Jesus received, and for His sake to undergo neglect, contumely, and the pinchings of poverty.

Let us make a fervent colloquy, and end with "Our Father."

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD IN GENERAL.

As it is impossible to enter into contemplation on all the mysteries of the Public Life of our Blessed Lord, we will resume under one exercise the more general examples and principles which may be drawn from a consideration of them in detail.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus our Lord, after His prayer, fasting, and temptations in the desert, entered upon the great work which He had come to do, and for three and a half years, amidst labours and fatigues, worked for the conversion of the world.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine the cities of Palestine, its towns and villages, through which He journeyed preaching His Gospel, and wrought innumerable prodig-

gies and benefits in favour of all, prompted in all things by the glory of His Father and by His love of souls.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg light to understand the lessons and examples of apostolic virtue which our Lord has given us, and the grace to reduce them to practice according to our state.

Point 1.—Let us consider how our Lord prepared for His Public Life. (a) To this end He directed the exercise of all the private virtues of His home-life of thirty years. (β) He would enter upon it by an astounding act of humility and would be reputed among sinners.¹ (γ) And when Heaven interposed, He withdrew at once into the desert, there to fast and pray. Who, then, will consider it too much to devote years to study and exercises of piety, to scrupulous preservation of purity and cultivation of all virtues, to make himself fit for such an exalted vocation as the priesthood? No one is formed on a sudden as a statue of bronze, but it is by repeated blows of hammer and chisel, as a statue of stone or marble. And this should continue even after we have entered upon the priesthood, if we mean to be efficient ministers for God's glory; which can never be unless we promote it first in our own souls. Let us see what is our disposition in regard of *poverty*; how we are affected to *humiliations*, the only way to acquire humility; how we accept of occasions of *mortifying* ourselves, and of resisting our inclinations to dissipation and to display. Alas! how much there is in us to be corrected under all these respects! How light we make of time and of the means for acquiring the knowledge and solid virtues which are necessary for all those who would promote the cause of God and the Kingdom of Christ in others.

Point 2.—*How Christ conducted Himself in His Public Life.*—(a) In everything He did or said He was animated

¹ St. Matt. iii. 13.

with one intention, namely, His Father's glory and the good of souls, ignoring Himself, His own convenience, interest, or glory. (β) He chose as companions simple, docile, and poor men, who according to the estimation of the world were miserable, and unfit to help Him. (γ) He laboured chiefly among the rude, illiterate, and poor. With Him there was no preference for the rich, the noble, the learned—if He had a preference it was for children, and for those despised by the world. (δ) His manner had no affectation of learning, nor effort at pleasing the ear, but He propounded simply the eternal truths, truths eminently useful to the soul, but by no means flattering to the senses; in language familiar and adapted to the capacity of the lowliest, making use of parables, similes, and examples. He won all hearts by His affability and benevolence, and inspired the greatest sinners with holy confidence. He was never harsh but to the obstinate, the proud, or the hypocrite; but to all others He was sweetness and charity itself, and tenderly considerate and compassionate. (ϵ) His every step was marked by words and deeds of kindness. (ζ) For Himself He cared nothing—He was houseless and homeless; for food He depended on charity; and His dress, though decent, was that of a poor man. Nor did He ever preach what He did not first practise Himself, a necessary condition of real success.

Point 3.—What are the fruits with which His labours were requited?—Certainly they are vast, and co-extensive in time and place with the world itself, since the coming and preaching of our Lord: but these have been the result of the labours of His instruments. During His Life He had only a few followers, and they were commonly poor—crowds gathered to listen to Him, but the result was inconsiderable. Again, His labours were requited generally with contradictions, persecutions, and

insults, &c., these from jealous priests, from envious Scribes and Pharisees, from princes and worldly slaves of passions—towards all of whom He combined the prudence of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. Let us remember that if they thus persecuted the Master, they will likewise do the same for us. This is the surest sign of real zeal, and of our producing fruit in souls. Let us dread applause and approbation. It is the worst sign which can attend our labours, and let us rather rejoice and exult when men shall persecute us.

End with colloquy and the "Our Father."

THE THIRD WEEK.

INTRODUCTION.

NOTE.—1. In the preceding contemplations, and especially in those of the "Kingdom of Christ" and "Two Standards," we have been labouring to acquire the spirit embodied in the third degree of humility as taught us by the lessons and actions of our Blessed Lord; a spirit which is the securest disposition for making a good election; and thus we have reached the summit, so to speak, of the Spiritual Exercises. The rest of the Exercises of the third and fourth parts, are intended mainly to confirm and strengthen us in it. This is the folly of the Cross, which is briefly laid down by St. Ignatius in the eleventh and twelfth Rules of the Summary of the Constitutions of his Society.¹

2. We may further observe, that in the second part we learn to detach ourselves from all inordinate affection for riches, honour, and all exterior things, whereas in this third part, we cut off all affection for ourselves and all forms of self-love, so as to embrace willingly any form of suffering, which whoever is determined to be a true friend of Jesus Christ must expect, for all who live piously in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.²

3. The subject of the Passion may be meditated from various points of view. Thus it may be considered

¹ *Direct.* xxxv.

² 2 Timothy iii. 12.

as throwing a lurid light on the horrible nature and malice of sin, and on the passions which by indulgence lead to sin.

It gives also a most sublime idea of the dignity of the human soul, and what is the price of its salvation. We see in it the grandeur and the infinite nobility of character of Jesus Christ, who out of love for us, by His own free choice and solely for our advantage, elected to suffer the torments, disgrace, and death of the Cross. It is from this last point of view that we should here contemplate the mysteries of His Passion, thereby to arouse in ourselves a spirit of love and generosity which will nerve us to make cheerfully the sacrifice which we have resolved upon in the election which we have made.

4. The better to appreciate the sublimity of love and of sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us in these mysteries, and the obligation of our making a due return, St. Ignatius adds three fresh points in the meditations. Besides considering the person, words, and actions involved in each mystery, we are to add in each point the consideration of what He suffers and wishes to suffer; how His Divinity conceals itself, except to enable Him to suffer more; and how He suffers all this for me.

The Divinity of our Lord during His Passion suspended its influence, except in so far as to intensify His sufferings by the dignity of His Personality and by the extreme delicacy, sensitiveness, and tenderness of the Body which He had assumed; as also to enable His Humanity to endure what would otherwise have caused His Human Nature to succumb, and to intensify the faculties of His Soul to appreciate His torments the more keenly.

All His sufferings, too, were freely accepted and welcomed, not only for mankind in the mass, but for

each of us individually, as St. Paul tells us, and consequently each man must hold himself responsible for the whole of what our Lord endured.¹

5. From these considerations there will be produced in the soul a feeling of sympathy, of sorrow, and of compassion, a desire to drink also of His chalice, and to imitate His resignation, charity, and humility, and those other virtues which He displayed in His sufferings.

6. We must also bear in mind that, as regards each of His bodily torments, He endured them interiorly from the moment of His Conception until His Passion and Death.

7. In considering *who* it is that suffers, we have to recall not only His infinite perfections in His Divine Nature, but also as He is Man: His royal descent, His *reputation* for power, holiness, and wisdom, His being universally known by all classes, His fame as a Wonder-worker and Prophet, His tender sensitiveness to pain, to cruelty, ingratitude, and injustice, &c.

8. As to the *disposition* with which He suffered, we must reflect that it was freely and out of love for His Father and for us individually, and that His desire of sufferings was greater than what He either did or could suffer.

9. In this third part the second Addition must be changed. As soon as we awake we must consider what we are about to do, recalling the subject of our meditation, and whilst dressing and washing we must excite ourselves to sorrow and compassion for the great sorrow and sufferings of Christ our Lord. As to the sixth Addition, we must turn away from all thoughts calculated to exhilarate us, even though good and holy, and occupy our minds with the memory of the sad events and labours and pains of our Blessed Lord, thereby to promote in ourselves kindred sentiments out

¹ Galat. ii. 20.

of love and gratitude and sympathy for Him. ~~With~~ regard to the tenth Addition, we must join our penances and sufferings with those of our God and Lord, offering them up to Him in a spirit of love and gratitude for what He is suffering for us, and out of a desire to keep Him company in His torments and Death so freely undergone for our sakes.

10. In the contemplations of the Passion, St. Ignatius puts Jesus before us as a model of the third degree of humility, inasmuch as He chooses by preference labours, watchings, the crushing out of the rebellion of the flesh, of the senses, and of worldly love, and substitutes in place of the latter, poverty, ignominy, sorrow, and pain.

It will be a help to us in these contemplations also to ponder the sentiments of our Lord in regard of the four classes of creatures mentioned in the "Foundation," about which we were to make ourselves practically indifferent.¹

11. It is to be noticed, as has been before declared, that in our colloquies we ought to reason and make our petitions according to the subject-matter of the contemplation, and according as we find ourselves affected by desolation or consolation; also as we desire some special virtue or to dispose ourselves for some particular sacrifice: finally, we should ask for what we most earnestly desire regarding any particular matter. Moreover, we may make either one colloquy, or according to the subject-matter and our devotion, three colloquies: one to the Mother, a second to her Son, and a third to the Heavenly Father, in the form laid down in the Contemplation of "Two Standards."

¹ Conf. *Constit. S.J.* part vi. c. 4, and Rules of *Sum.* xi. xii. xxiii. xxiv. xxv.

THE LAST SUPPER.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall the history how our Lord took supper with His Apostles on the paschal lamb; after which He washed their feet, and then instituted the Most Adorable Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the Supper-room, and observing all that is said and done.

Prelude 3.—Let us entreat of our Lord to excite in our hearts suitable sentiments of admiration, sorrow, confusion, and gratitude towards Him who for our sins is about to undergo His Passion.

Point 1.—As His Passion drew near, our Lord frequently referred in His discourses with His Apostles to the sufferings which awaited Him in Jerusalem; and once when Peter would dissuade Him from them, He gained the reproach of the tempter: *Vade post me . . . scandalum es mihi*. Now, He goes with speedy steps before His Apostles, who were full of dread, knowing the great risks He was to run in Jerusalem.² They go to the Supper-room, which was ample, stately, and beautifully set out, as though Jesus was going to

¹ "And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice, He gave thanks, and said: Take and divide it among you. For I say to you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till the Kingdom of God come. And taking the bread, He gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is My Body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner the chalice also after He had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you." (St. Luke xxii. 14—23. Comp. St. Matt. xxvi. and St. Mark xiv.)

² St. Mark x. 32.

celebrate a solemn banquet of joy; when the lamb to be eaten was the figure of His Death; and He would go forth from that chamber to begin His journey to His grave. As soon as all were seated, He discloses to them the ardent desire of His Heart,¹ He tells them of the horrid treachery of which He is the victim, and that, without any sign of fear, nay, He says to the traitor, "What thou art going to do, do quickly."² After which He offers Himself to His Father, begging that His impending Passion and Death may serve to manifest His Divinity and glorify His Name. Thus He showed His vehement longing to suffer in order to accomplish our redemption and glorify God His Father.

Let us learn this lesson, that pains, torments, and persecutions ought not to prove a source of dread and terror to a companion of Jesus Christ, but rather a subject of joy, because it is the time of imitating Him and of glorifying His Father. Self-love, sensuality, and worldly principles may say to us, as Peter to Jesus, *Absit a te, &c.*, to dissuade us from suffering; but Jesus tells us, *Oportet ire ad Jerusalem, &c.*, it behoveth to go to Jerusalem to suffer much and be slain; for whoever will lead a perfect life must encounter crosses, hardships, and insults, and therefore should prepare earnestly and cheerfully for them. Let us then pray for such generous desires, and offer ourselves in union with our Blessed Lord for whatever sufferings God may be pleased to send us in regard of poverty, humiliations, and contempt, or which our election may entail, and which, if rightly made, must involve some sacrifice.

Point 2.—Washing of Feet.—Whilst they were yet at supper, our Lord arose, took off His upper garment, put on an apron, and of Himself prepares a vessel of water, as if He were a servant. Then, kneeling down,

¹ St. Luke xxii. 15.

² St. John xiii.

He washes the feet of each Apostle, and dries them with His Divine hands, nor does He omit Judas, though at the time He knew that he had sold Him for five pounds and would betray Him with a kiss. Let us hear St. Peter, *Tu mihi, &c.* TU: the Son of God, the Lord of the Universe, the Master of Creation, the most holy, the most noble, the most worthy of all honour, who sittest at the right hand of the Father, whose footstool are the Seraphim. MIHI: at the feet of poor fishermen, ignorant, rude peasants, to wash them with His own almighty hands! Oh! what a grand lesson is given us here!

Jesus is about to enter upon the fourth great step in His mortal life, and as He began with humiliation in His Incarnation, came into the world with humiliation, commenced His Public Life with humiliation, so will He begin His Passion with the same. When shall we learn this first condition of being His? Into what an abyss of self-abasement should not our pride sink when we see the Lord of angels and of men, even in their presence humble Himself so low through love for us and to give us an example!

Well might St. Francis Borgia become quite dazed after, in contemplation, going to humble himself at the feet of Judas and finding himself forestalled by our Blessed Lord; and when asked why he was so distracted, should give for answer that the Son of God was already at the feet of Judas before him. Let us bring home to ourselves the words, "If I have washed your feet, you also must wash one another's feet; for truly the servant is not greater than his master, nor the Apostle greater than Him who sent him." And truly knowing this theoretically, we shall be blessed by reducing this knowledge to practice. If we are to do anything great for God, or if we are to gain any perfection in our state, we must lay the solid foundation of

humility, and this we can never hope to attain except by acts of humiliation.

Point 3.—Jesus institutes the Holy Eucharist.—Let us see our Lord full of love for His own even to the last, taking bread into His blessed hands and lifting up His eyes to His Heavenly Father, and with Heart inflamed with love for us, He blessed it and transubstantiated it into His own Body, leaving it to His Church in memory of His undying charity towards men. Oh, the charity, power, and wisdom of our Lord. He gives us Himself, He could do no more¹—He gives It under the form of bread and wine, that He might be our food, and that we might be intimately united and one with Him, He changing us into Himself, not we changing Him into ourselves.² And He does it at the very time when man's ingratitude was plotting how to vent the utmost efforts of its malice against Him. Let us admire the infinite goodness, liberality, and meekness of our dear Lord. What return can we make to Him who loved us so, and who thus hands Himself over for us. Is it too much to love Him truly in return, to love only what

¹ St. Ignatius in the third point of this meditation says: "He instituted the most Sacred Sacrifice of the Eucharist as the *greatest* proof of His love," &c. With reason does he call it the *greatest*; for although our Lord has said, "Greater love than this no man hath than that he lay down his life for his friends," and this because as a mere man he has nothing more to give, yet our Lord, who was God and Man, could devise and furnish greater proof still. In His Passion and Death He sacrificed Himself for us for some hours, but in the Eucharistic Sacrifice He offers Himself with equal intensity of love, of merit, and of devotedness from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, and He will continue to do so until the end of time. Again, in the Eucharistic Sacrifice we have the real memorial of His Death upon the Cross, with the additional privilege of being able to feed upon His Sacred Flesh and Blood, thereby becoming members of His Body and partakers of His eternal glory. Moreover, He gives us this Holy Sacrament notwithstanding His clear foreknowledge of all the irreverences, outrages, and sacrileges to which He will expose Himself, not only from heretics, but also from bad Catholics.

² St. Augustine.

He loved; to choose for our portion poverty, contempt, and humiliation? to take the offensive against carnal, sensual, and worldly love? Is it not enough to cause us to blush for shame, to think that we consider that in the election we have made and in its consequent sacrifice, we are making any competent return for what He has done for us? And what is our return to Him as regards His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament? With what coldness and indifference do we treat Him; how rarely do we go to visit Him in His solitude and abandonment! How stinting are we in the time we spend with Him there. Alas! though He is pleased with any little attention which we show Him, and is ever open-handed to bless us, do we not show Him but scant reverence and respect?

In our colloquy let us pour out our soul to Him and with shame and confusion, and hearts breaking with compassion and full of gratitude, let us say the *Anima Christi*. Then let us offer Him up to the Eternal Father, and by His Sacred Body and Blood let us pray for what we desire, and end with "Our Father."

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us make an act of faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in the tabernacle, and prostrate ourselves before Him.

Prelude 2.—Let us implore an intimate knowledge of this Mystery, and intense love of Jesus in this Holy Sacrament.

Point 1.—Let us reflect that He is here fulfilling His promise: "Behold I am with you," &c.¹ But why,

¹ St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

O Jesus, are you here? why thus shut up and a prisoner for nearly nineteen hundred years? It is not to redeem us! Nor is it necessary in order to give us grace. No! it is because His delight is to be personally and bodily amongst us.¹ His love seeks for and desires the presence of the beloved one; and lest we might be scared by His majesty, He veils it; and He will abide in nooks and corners of cities, in town and country, on hill-sides and in remote valleys; He will not have any one deprived of His presence. And at all times He would have us come into His royal presence without ceremony to converse with Him. Any hour of the day or night we are welcomed by Him with open arms, always sure of a hearty reception. He is ever ready to console us, to dry our tears, to dispel our darkness, to soften our hearts, to wash away our sins, to strengthen our weakness, to bestow fresh graces. Oh, the thousand blessings we enjoy in His adorable and loving presence!

There is no need to envy the Apostles and disciples or the dwellers in Palestine who saw and heard Jesus. We have Him more present to each of us. They had Him in the days of His infirmity and weakness, we have Him in His state of glory; they had His presence at intervals, we have Him always, and can find Him at any time without having to wander far to find Him. Why are we so miserable and sad, so languid and disconsolate when we have the source of all happiness? so blind and cold when we can always have recourse to the source of light and heat? How can we have behaved so to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament?

• O my God, grant that we may henceforth make Thy tabernacle our home, and, as Thy priests,

¹ "And My delights to be with the children of men." (Prov. viii. 31.)

live by the food and the life that dwell in Thy tabernacles.¹

Point 2.—Let us consider the Life of Jesus in the Eucharist. It is the compendium of all His wonderful works. He is mysteriously born at the bidding of His minister, the altar becoming another Bethlehem; and the solitude of the tabernacle is but the Hidden Life in Egypt. Those that gather round it recall the poor shepherds who paid homage at His Birth. In how many places is His dwelling as poor and cheerless and unvisited as was that of His home for nearly thirty years at Nazareth; and here He is not obedient to Mary or Joseph, but to His poor and often unworthy ministers. Here, too, He is the perpetual Victim and Holocaust to His Eternal Father. In His Public Life He went about doing good,² and ever since in the Eucharist He has continued instructing, admonishing, consoling, enlightening the blind, raising the dead, healing all spiritual diseases, and working all the good that is done in the Church. Here, too, we have the representation, renewal, and continuation of all the sufferings of His mortal Life, for though in His glorified state Jesus cannot sorrow nor suffer, yet the affronts and vile treatment of His creatures in His regard cease not to be equally real. He is ever in the state of a victim, and enters into the breasts of men, as into a sepulchre, often neither new nor clean, and too often He sees Himself treated by those who come into His presence as disrespectfully and irreverently as He was by the rabble during His Passion. Alas! how many, like Judas, give Him the traitor's kiss! To say nothing

¹ "Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever." (Psalm lxxiii. 4, 5.)

² "Jesus of Nazareth; how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts x. 38.)

of the foul blasphemies and outrages done to Him by heretics and infidels, by the sacrilegious spoliation and desecration of His altars and churches. Yet He is silent and patient, and meekly bears all these affronts out of His ineffable charity. Let us learn to bear in our turn, after His example and in union with Him, the scorn and contempt of others, and in charity to forgive them and to pray for those who injure us. This, by His grace, at least, we can do, if we are too faint-hearted to accept them with joy.

Point 3.—What is the ultimate end of His presence? Love tends to union, to make the lover and beloved one. It is, that Jesus may make us one with Himself, to deify us, so to speak, by the life of grace now and of glory hereafter. In the Eucharist we have an extension of the Incarnation, Jesus uniting Himself with each of us and making us sharers of His Divine Nature. "We are made one body and one flesh with Him."¹ No mother could ever think or wish to be transformed into food to nourish her child! And to think that the Babe of Bethlehem, the Artisan of Nazareth, the Crucified, becomes one flesh with me! that He who is being adored by angels in all His infinite glory, enters our wretched bodies, our cold and ungrateful and corrupted hearts, and makes Himself one with us. How the head swims in realizing it! Still His love is pleased to do it, for He desires to eat this Pasch with us; nay more, He threatens us with death unless we receive Him, and promises us life eternal in case we satisfy His desire.

And for this end He employs His omnipotence, destroying space and time, and His infinite ingenuity and wisdom, and will expose Himself to infinite outrage and blasphemy. Oh! the love of His mighty Heart! And if we consider the nature of that Food!

¹ St. Augustine.

It is His living, Divine, and glorified Flesh — His blessed Soul, in which are all the treasures, gifts, virtues, graces, and infinite merits of the only-begotten of the Father, together with the Divinity. All this He is ready to give us daily, and if by sickness we cannot go to Him, He is ever prepared to come to us upon our bed of sickness, and to be our Viaticum on our journey from this world to our home of eternity.

What can we do in return? Is it too much to give ourselves body and soul in return? Alas! what a miserable thing each of us has to offer, and yet all that is good in it is His already on a thousand titles, and all the bad in it comes only from our wretched selves. Let us try by our love to make the offering less unacceptable; but that love must prove itself practically by a close imitation of His life of solitude, of self-denial, of long-suffering and of humility, and especially by constancy in the sacrifice to which we have pledged ourselves in our late election.

In our colloquy let us beg these graces through the intercession of our Lady and of our Blessed Lord, and lastly let us implore the same from God Himself, by the humiliations and love of His well-beloved Son in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and end with the "Our Father."

If time allows, the usual repetitions of the two preceding meditations may be made, and, at night, the application of the senses to the same meditations.

DISCOURSE OF JESUS AFTER THE SUPPER.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—After the departure of Judas, Jesus addresses His Apostles in words of consolation and encouragement; He also impresses upon them the duty of union with Himself and with one another. He announces to them the severe persecutions and trials which the future has in store for them, at the same time inspiring them with strength to bear them; and finally prays for them in a colloquy with His Eternal Father.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit take up our place in the Cenacle.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg with earnest desire profound sorrow at the sight of our God and Lord who is about to suffer reproach and disgrace, torments, and death for our sins; and let us pray that we may in a spirit of love and gratitude bear Him company.

Point 1.—Well might the Apostles look to Jesus for some words of comfort. They knew that one of them was a traitor, that another was to deny the Master, and that He Himself was shortly going to leave them; besides, they were aware that the Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees were all concerting together how to seize Him, to put Him to death. He bids them “not to let their hearts be troubled;” for though He is going, He will prepare a place also for them, provided only that they believe in God His Father, and in Himself who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Then Philip with ingenuous candour asks Jesus to show them His Father to whom He is going. Upon which He tells them that He is consubstantial with the Father, that he that sees

¹ St. John xiv. xv. xvi.

one sees also the other, as He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him, that He speaks in His Name, and works in Him. Again, He encourages them by the promise that if they believe in Him and in His teaching, even though He withdraws His visible presence, they shall have power to work greater wonders than they had seen Him perform, and He would do whatsoever they asked His Father in His Name, or whatsoever they asked of Him. Thus they are to possess their souls in peace by a lively faith and a firm hope in Him and in His promises; but they must also derive courage from a practical love of Him by keeping His commandments. Then "I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Spirit, to act as your comforter, guide, and advocate, who will abide with you and will dwell within you."

But He further goes on to say, that He will not leave them like orphans; that He will return to them, after He has risen from the dead, and then "they shall know that He is in the Father, and they in Him, and also He in them;" and that the "Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, will enlighten them to understand and feel all those things which He has taught them."

Finally, He concludes this part of His discourse by bestowing His peace, not a worldly unreal peace, upon them, bidding them out of love for Him not to be afraid, but to rejoice that He is going to His Father. He tells them this beforehand, so that when it comes to pass in a few hours, they may remain firm in their faith. Oh, who can conceive such tender care and love on the part of Jesus for these poor fishermen! He forgets Himself, His anguish of mind and Heart, to comfort and encourage them! He is all anxiety to prepare and strengthen them that they may resist the terrible temptation with which they will shortly be assailed; but for Himself He has no care. And yet, O dear

Lord, there is no one to think of your poor Heart, or to soothe it by a word of sympathy! O my soul, let us try to comfort Him by offering ourselves to share His sorrows of which we are the cause, and to join Him in His self-sacrifice by fidelity to the resolution which we have taken in the matter of our election.

Point 2.—He commends to them union with Him, and among themselves.¹ Jesus then shows them how “He is in the Father, and they in Him and He in them,” by the comparison of the Vine. He is “the true Vine,” the perfect Vine which the Father has planted on earth, in the Incarnation and assumption of human nature, that He may by the wine of His Precious Blood save and redeem the world: His disciples are the branches. If they remain united with Him they shall bear fruit, but if not so united with Him, they shall be cast off by His Father. Whilst they remain in Him, through the merits of His Passion and Death, they will bear much fruit in the supernatural order, being united with Him by Divine faith and charity; but where these are wanting, union is dissolved, and all supernatural virtue disappears, and with it all supernatural life, no matter how great their natural gifts may be, and their end will be to be cast into the fire, where “the worm dieth not, and the fire is never extinguished.”² He tells them, moreover, that as long as they abide in Him, they may petition for what they wish and it shall be granted them; that they shall give great glory to God by promoting the salvation of souls, and by proving faithful disciples to Him.

He next makes an astounding declaration, which must have filled the spirits of Heaven with wonder; for He likens His love for them to that of His Father for Himself! to this He appeals in order to induce them to remain in His love! and this they will do if

¹ St. John xv.

² St. Mark ix. 43.

they will observe the precepts He has given them as He also observes those given to Him by His Father; and in this manner they will be a source of joy to Him whilst they themselves will also be filled with joy.

He then passes on to the duty of loving one another and of fraternal union. In His Apostles He requires a love far more perfect, far greater than that which they have for themselves; "they are to love one another as *He* has loved *them!*" even to the shedding of their blood for those that they love, even though their love is unrequited or is repaid only by hatred and persecution: and this is to be done out of the love they bear to Him who is their Lord and Saviour, and who has shown them special marks of His love by selecting them from the rest of men for the great work of the Apostolate. He insists a second time upon the obligation of taking to heart His commandment of loving even their enemies, of which He has set them the example, for He has loved the world which hates Him, and He is about to lay down His life for it; and so, too, it will hate them, yet they must be prepared to sacrifice themselves in like manner for the salvation of souls. The reason of this hostility and hatred, He tells them, is on His account, and because of His and their teaching and example, which are opposed to and condemnatory of the judgment and conduct of the children of this world. Let us weigh well the necessity of this union with our dear Lord: as long as this exists we cannot go astray, we shall dwell in the light of truth, and shall enjoy supernatural life. We shall suffer with Him it is true, but He will enable us to endure, and will make our sufferings sweet and will help us to turn them to our future glory. Let us in our dealings with our neighbours be ever practically mindful that we are bound to love all, even those who injure and persecute us. To our human nature it may be hard, but with the

grace of God, which will not be wanting to us, nothing is impossible. Besides Jesus commands, and with His blessing we will obey.

Point 3.—Jesus foretells the persecution of His Apostles, and encourages them to be firm. The Jews will excommunicate them, and will flatter themselves, in their guilty ignorance, that they are doing a good service by putting them to death. On hearing these things, naturally, sorrow filled their hearts, and the more so as He is about to depart. Yet it is for their benefit that He is going, and He will send to them the Paraclete, who will impart to them all truth, will enlighten and strengthen them, whilst He will at the same time convict the world of *sin* in refusing to believe in Him, notwithstanding His teaching and miracles; of *justice* in refusing to recognize His own justice and that of His disciples; of *judgment*, by exposing the falsehood and criminality of Satan and his followers in this world.

They would like to know more precisely whither He is going, but He delays to add to their sorrow by detailing to them His approaching sufferings; with deep emotion, however, He announces the grief that His Passion will cause them, adding that it will later be turned into joy at His Resurrection. He forgets Himself, thinks only of their sorrow and distress, and promises them that He will shortly return, and will fill their hearts with gladness, such as the world knows not of, and which it cannot rob them of. Moreover, when He does come back, His Spirit will teach them all things, so that they will not need to ask Him any more questions such as they had been asking. He winds up by urging them to more earnestness and constancy and confidence in prayer to His Eternal Father, who loves them because of their love for Himself and of their faith in Him, notwithstanding that this faith was still

weak. Let us admire the charity and compassion of our dear Lord. He knows their weakness, and that in their terror they will abandon Him and leave Him in the hands of His enemies, yet He does not betray the slightest impatience or resentment, but employs all His powers to encourage and comfort them. Who can help loving Him for His disinterested devotedness and tender compassion. O my dear Lord and Saviour, grant that we may never abandon Thee.

Let us make our colloquy with our Blessed Lord, and say the *Anima Christi*. End with the "Our Father."

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how, after the discourse and the chanting of the hymn were finished, Jesus went with the Eleven to Gethsemani; how He left eight at the entrance, and took Peter, James, and John into the interior, and going a little apart from them, He knelt in prayer.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture our Lord in His prayer and agony, and the Apostles asleep.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg for that which we earnestly desire, namely, the special grace of sorrow with Jesus filled with sorrow, of anguish with Him broken down with anguish, of tears and interior pain with Him who is suffering so intensely for us and for our sins.

Point 1.—Let us see our Lord, though outwardly so

¹ "When Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden into which He entered with His disciples. And Judas also, who betrayed Him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither together with His disciples. . . . Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth," &c. (St. John xviii. 1-4.)

calm, yet inwardly full of *loathing* and disgust, overwhelmed with *terror*, and drowned in a sea of *sadness*,¹ a state that would have killed Him but that He supported life by His Divine power. At length His countenance, which is the joy of Paradise and of the earth, becomes disfigured with agony. But why? First by the terrific sight of all the iniquities of men, the burden of which is cast upon His innocent Soul, that He may make condign satisfaction for them to the Divine justice.

Next His imagination presents to Him a sight of all the torments He was to undergo. This is often far more terrible than the reality. In addition He knows the real malice and heinousness of each sin. To be in doubt whether we are guilty of a mortal sin works sometimes like madness on our brain, and almost turns us wild. What, then, must have been the horror of Jesus to see Himself the great sin-offering, and accounted guilty by His Father; and by such and so loved a Father!

Lastly, He sees that men will not only prove ungrateful for all His sufferings, but that they will turn them to their greater condemnation: worst of all, that those whom He has specially chosen, and nurtured in the sanctuary, that even some of *them* would turn His torments to their terrible ruin and destruction. Oh! let us bewail our own sins, which have caused all this agony; let us detest them, and let us offer up to God this sorrow of our dear Lord in atonement for them, and entreat pardon through the merits of His fearful torments.

Point 2.—Let us contemplate our Lord persevering in His prayer amidst this agony,² resigning Himself entirely to the will of His Heavenly Father, repeating always the one prayer, "Not as I will, but as Thou,"

¹ "My Soul is sorrowful even unto death." (St. Mark xiv. 34.)

² "And being in an agony He prayed the longer." (St. Luke xxii. 43.)

"Yet not My will, but Thine be done." He does not in His anguish seek comfort in moaning, in pouring out His griefs to His disciples, but seeks it in solitary prayer to His Father, and the greater His anguish the longer is His prayer, even though He can only keep repeating the self-same words.

Let us take home to ourselves this grand lesson, and in our hours of disgust, vexation, disquiet, desolation of spirit, repugnance, and melancholy, let us fly to our God, and in our distress with Jesus let us pray the longer; but let it be in solitude, avoiding the company of men, and not seeking unduly their sympathy: and with our Blessed Lord let us say always, "Yet not my will, but Thine be done." This Divine will is the sovereign good, all good, to obtain and fulfil which, pains, agonies, and even death itself are well endured.

Let us rest assured that in the pursuit of perfection, and especially in the Apostolic life, we shall meet with things which will cause us "loathing," "fear," and "anxiety," and "sadness," such as change of place or occupation, repugnances, persecutions, calumnies, labours, and fatigues, and the like. In these circumstances, let our prayer be, *Non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat*. It will bring us strength and consolation, and will render us cheerful and ready to bear every hardship.

Point 3.—Let us behold Jesus flat on the ground while the blood oozes through the pores of His skin, and soaks through His clothes and moistens the earth.¹ This was produced by the generous resistance He offers to the repugnance of nature. Oh, what is the malice of sin, which requires tears of blood to atone for it! which so weighs upon the mighty Heart of our Lord as to force the blood through its natural barriers. Who has done this terrible deed, and caused this bloody

¹ "And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." (St. Luke xxii. 44.)

sweat? Alas! it is we who have done it. Let us then at least mingle a few tears of water with the red tears of Jesus, and make an act of profound contrition. Let us not decline to accept any trial which God may send us, no matter how repugnant to our nature; even though it may cause our hearts to break. Jesus has drunk the chalice for us, and let us drink ours for Him. "What shall I give back to the Lord for all He has done for me? I will drink the chalice of my salvation, and my strength shall be in prayer to the Lord." Let us present this first Blood spilt in His Passion to His Father, and by it let us ask for the graces we desire.

Point 4.—Let us consider the conduct of His Apostles. Jesus had told them on the way to the Garden that they would all be scandalized in Him that night; this had intensified their fears and sadness, which were but little allayed by His words of encouragement, "But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." On reaching the Garden, He entered it with Peter, James, and John, who had witnessed His Transfiguration, and bidding them to pray not to enter into temptation, He retired Himself to pray. But sorrow made their eyes heavy, and they fell asleep. Little did they know the awful transfiguration taking place so near them. For now the Divinity of Jesus withdrew its influence from His Humanity, except so far as was necessary to enable it to support its most terrible sufferings, which otherwise would have separated Soul and Body. He came to see them, awoke them, and begged of them to watch and pray, and again withdrew: but again they fell fast asleep. Alas! poor human nature. Not an hour ago they had protested their loyalty and fidelity, their readiness to die with Him: now they cannot watch for an hour with Him! He has told them that He was deadly sad; broken down and prostrated by His anguish, exhausted

in mind, heart, and body, quivering in an agony, and yet they sleep all the while! Oh, what must have been the feelings of the Sacred Heart of our dear Lord, to find even His three privileged Apostles, whom He loved so tenderly, so dead to all He was enduring! "He looked for one to sympathize with Him and found none." His Father's face was turned away from Him, His Mother was not allowed to be with Him, His Apostles are too drowsy to heed Him; there is no one to think of Him but His enemies, who are mustering in the city to come out and seize Him. O dear Lord, grant that we may not, like the Apostles, forget Thy counsel, "Watch and pray." Grant us Thy grace that we may never neglect our daily duties of meditation and of examination of conscience, on which our perseverance in Thy service mainly depends; and by neglect of which, we shall expose ourselves to fly and abandon Thee in the hour of trial.

End with "Our Father."

THE SEIZURE OF JESUS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus is betrayed by His own Apostle, is seized by His enemies and dragged as a criminal into the city and through the streets of Jerusalem.

Prelude 2.—Let us stand by and observe what passes.

¹ "Behold Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves. . . . And he that betrayed Him had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully. And when He was come, immediately going up to Him he saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him. But they laid hands on Him and held Him. . . . And they brought Jesus to the High Priest." (St. Mark xiv. 43—53.)

Prelude 3.—Let us beg light to see how Jesus, the very soul of honour, welcomes oppression and ignominy for our sakes, and grace to ambition His spirit of fortitude under trials and persecution.

Point 1.—Let us see Judas—he is not asleep—an Apostle, instructed in the school of Christ, favoured with the gift of miracles, and a witness of the powers, wisdom, and sanctity of his Master. Can no one else be found, even among His enemies, to betray Him?

They who have been the most favoured of God, when blinded by passions, fall the deepest. Judas was the slave of a predominant passion of avarice, and courted the favour of the priesthood, and so is led into his enormous treachery. For this object he has recourse to mean craft and cunning, and chooses as the scene of his crime the very place where he had so often prayed with Jesus. He arrives there with a company of soldiers bearing torches and lanterns, and approaches his Master and dares to kiss Him! thereby notifying to His enemies which was Jesus. Let us humble ourselves and be filled with holy fear at seeing how the apostleship of Judas ended, in the blackest sacrilege that the world has ever known. There is no depth of sin into which even a Religious may not fall, if he begins to gratify any unruly passion or neglect any duty, especially that of prayer. Let us beware of too feeling and tender affections, too great a desire to humour and please others, or to be liked and applauded by others. Let us watch with all diligence over the first beginnings of evil, and thus we shall avoid the great calamity of betraying our Blessed Lord and incurring eternal perdition.

But if we reflect on the effect of this crime on our Lord, what pain and affliction it must have caused His loving Heart to see Himself thus treated by a disciple

whom He Himself had chosen and had so signally favoured! What a fearful insult it was! What ignominy and dishonour it caused Him in the sight of His enemies! How it must have tended to lead them to presume His guilt, when they saw one of His own disciples and intimate friends offer Him up to the authorities, go in person to take Him, and forewarn the instruments of justice to apprehend Him with caution. Nevertheless, our meek Lord admits him to His embrace, and calls him by the endearing title of *friend*. Oh! let us from this learn, when we meet with ill-usage and offensive treatment from those who should be the last in the world so to behave towards us, to imitate Jesus betrayed and insulted by His own disciples; let us learn to be, like Him, meek and humble of heart, and let us lay at the feet of our dear Lord every feeling of vindictiveness and loathing which our nature or the devil may arouse in us.

Point 2.—It is the common opinion of the learned¹ that when our Lord was made known to the soldiers by being approached and embraced by Judas, their eyes were dazzled by the splendour of His majesty, or that He deprived them of their sight, and that they became stunned and motionless, until He advanced to meet them, and though wild with excitement and rage, they waited till He asked them, "Whom seek ye?" and on their saying, "Jesus of Nazareth," He answered, "I am He."² On the instant they fell flat on the ground, quaking with fear: and there they would have remained had He not given them strength to rise, and then yielding Himself up into their hands, showed how

¹ Toletus, in Joan. xviii.

² "As soon, therefore, as He had said to them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground. Again, therefore, He asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am He. If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way." (St. John xviii. 6—8.)

truly He had said, "No man taketh My life away, but I give it up of Myself."

There are many indeed who, like the soldiers, when asked the object they have in view, will openly declare that it is Jesus of Nazareth. What do they seek in this or that office, in this or that employment? They will answer, The glory and service of God, the sanctification of their own or their neighbour's soul!—*Jesum Nazarenum!*—whilst in reality it is to gratify their inordinate inclinations or self-love; and thus they behave in a manner injurious and dishonourable towards God. To such our Lord renders Himself invisible, and resists their unworthy designs, or condemns them to failure.

Again we see that in the very beginning of His Passion He was pleased to make known His Divine power by working a miracle, to show that He suffered not through force or necessity, but of His own free-will; and by this would teach us to accept in a cheerful and willing spirit all kinds of labours and sufferings, and not through necessity or in a spirit of compulsion, not as a malefactor, but like Him of whom it was written, "He was offered because He Himself willed it."

Point 3.—Let us, in a spirit of tender sympathy, contemplate the ill-usage which our Lord experienced at His capture.

The hour had come, the hour of darkness and of the infernal powers. The Temple guard and servants seized Him and bound Him tight, fearing lest He might escape. Let us listen to their shouts and clamour on having succeeded in taking Him prisoner; let us see their insults and the blows they deal at Him, as they hustle Him and drag Him along to the house of Annas, who was one of the chief leaders in plotting His death, and a miserable prevaricator in his holy calling.

And who is this apparent robber and malefactor? It is the almighty and all-holy Son of God, whom the

angels were adoring. It is the Son of Man; the most beautiful, the most wise, the most holy, and the gentlest and most loving Man that ever lived. He that alone is most worthy of all honour, adoration, and praise, cheerfully accepts ignominy, contempt, and shame: nay, He actually restrains, so to speak, His Divinity so as to augment His sufferings: and all this for each of us, out of love and a desire to atone for our sins. And what have we done for love of Him in return? How often have we promised to follow in His footsteps and to imitate His example, thereby to give glory to His Father, comfort to Him, and to sanctify our own souls! And yet, alas! how often, like the Apostles, have we left Him and fled, or perhaps worse, joined with the rabble in seizing Him and binding Him fast. But what shall we do in future? We will keep Him company in His ignominious journey, with profound sentiments of grief; and reflecting on the thoughts and affections which He entertained in His Soul, we will thence draw new motives to advance in virtue and perfection, and pray for more ardent desires to share His ignominies with Him, if it be the will of God and for His greater glory.

Lastly, let us make the usual colloquies, and end with "Our Father."

If time allows, we may make two repetitions of the two preceding meditations, and an application of the senses, as the last exercise before supper.

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—They bind our Lord, hustle Him, and drag Him along into Jerusalem to the house of Annas; there they make their accusations against Him, give Him a blow on the face, &c.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit accompany our Lord and Master.

Prelude 3.—Let us pray for what we really want, namely, intense sorrow and confusion to see Jesus so sad and so suffering for our sins, and through love for us accepting insults and outrages, and let us beg of Him grace to share His sufferings with Him.

Point 1.—Let us contemplate our dear Jesus, somewhat revived by the visit “of the Angel from Heaven strengthening Him,” as He meekly allows His enemies to bind Him as if He were a dangerous malefactor. They rudely pull Him about, hit Him, heap blasphemies and insults upon Him, and carried away by rage and envy they indulge in all sorts of outrage against Him, whilst He remains silent, and as a sheep He is led to the slaughter not opening His mouth. Not one is there to take His part or to stand up for Him. Let us see the people as the mob drag Him through the streets, inquiring what may be the cause of all the tumult. On being told that they are leading Jesus of Nazareth before the High Priest, how many conclude that He must then be a deceiver, a false pretender, that His miracles must have been mere knavery, and perhaps they condemned themselves for their credulity in

¹ “Then the band and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus and bound Him: and they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the High Priest of that year.” (St. John xviii. 12.)

believing in Him. Others condemn Him seeing that one of His followers has betrayed Him, while all the rest have fled and left Him. They reach the house of Annas, and whilst waiting for admission let us see them carried away by rage and hatred, pulling faces at Him, clenching their fists at Him, spitting upon Him, and turning Him to ridicule. Truly the words of holy David are verified: "Many calves have surrounded Me, fat bulls have besieged Me. They have opened their mouths against Me, as a lion ravening and roaring."¹ Jesus all the while silently and joyfully welcomes all these outrages for our sakes and for our salvation. He prays for His cruel tormentors, and offers up His insults to His Father in satisfaction for our wretched vanity and pride. O my soul, what return can we, or shall we make to our Jesus for all that He has undergone for our sins, and for all this love that He has shown for us? Shall we hesitate to brave the odium and hostility of the world in the promotion of His glory, and in the discharge of our duty? Shall we court the applause or praise of others, and like cowards cringe before those who oppose Him and His Mystical Spouse, His Holy Church? Is it thus that we shall keep our pledge to follow Him in humiliations and opprobrium? O dear Lord Jesus, give us grace to be honest and true to Thee, and to follow Thee along the way of the Cross.

Point 2.—He appears before Annas. As the father-in-law of Caiphas, who was the High Priest of the year, he had no right or authority to sit in judgment over Jesus; but to sate his hatred and gratify his ambition, our Lord is brought before him. Let us contemplate the meek and patient Jesus as they drag Him into the presence of this unfortunate judge, bound with ropes like a dangerous criminal. He is confronted with the

¹ Psalm xxi. 13, 14.

unworthy priests, the scribes, and elders, all filled with anger and venom against Him, because He had denounced their corruption and hypocrisy, had tried to protect the populace against their avarice and extortion, and had won the respect and esteem of those who listened to His teaching. He stands there gentle as a lamb, surrounded by ravenous wolves. Then Annas put questions to Him regarding His disciples and His doctrine. To the first He makes no answer, though He knew how they had bribed one of them to betray Him. To the second He replies by appealing to those who have been present whilst He was preaching daily in the Temple: for Jesus knew that His judges were well acquainted with all He taught and had often heard Him, and further that they merely desired to gain a pretext for His destruction. Upon this a servant stepped forward and dealt Jesus a blow on the face! Oh, the long-suffering and patience of Jesus, the rash boldness and malice of men! The Lord struck by a slave! The great Creator by a low creature! Infinite Majesty, before whom the pillars of Heaven tremble and the eternal hills melt away, is struck in the face by a vile worm of the earth! yet though heavenly spirits were horrified to see their King insulted, He accepts it readily to pay the penalty of our sins of pride. How do we bear with the insults of others? How often alas! instead of following the example of Jesus, do we harbour a spirit of vindictiveness, and are not content till we see ourselves avenged, and our enemies humbled! Yet, dear Lord, we flatter ourselves that all this is done in the cause of justice, and that we are following in Thy footsteps!

Point 3.—Jesus is taken to the court of Caiphas. Whilst Jesus was detained before Annas, the High Priest had time to assemble a number of members of the great Council to try Jesus. Meanwhile, the pride

of Annas had been flattered, his curiosity had been gratified, and he consequently bids the soldiers to take Jesus away and lead Him off to Caiphas. Emboldened by the impunity of the wretch who struck Jesus on the face, and by the applause with which the blasphemy was rewarded, the cruel rabble vie with each other who shall insult and outrage Him the most. Let us contemplate our poor Jesus in the midst of this mob, as they lead Him along the dark streets to the house of Caiphas. His Body is faint and wearied from His three hours of agony and from the loss of blood, His limbs are galled by the tight ropes with which they are still bound, yet His Soul is free to make its offering of all that He endures to His Eternal Father for His tormentors, and to pray for their forgiveness. Though He is surrounded and pressed on every side by His enemies, He is a solitary. No friend to say a word for Him, none to comfort Him, or sympathize with Him: the only two that love Him at all were following Him, but they kept at a distance. This is the end of the solemn promises made a few hours before by the eleven Apostles! Truly the spirit was willing when they were with Jesus, but the spirit and flesh are weak indeed when we are away or at a distance from Him. Let us in spirit keep our poor Lord company, and try to comfort Him. This is best done by close union with Him in prayer, in daily meditation, by frequently visiting Him in the Sacrament of His love, by often receiving Him in Holy Communion. Let us learn to mistrust ourselves, and at the same time put all our confidence in Him, who is faithful and will not suffer us to be tried above what we are able, if only we cling to Him.

End with colloquy, and "Our Father."

JESUS BEFORE CAIPHAS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how, after our Lord had been led before Annas to satisfy his curiosity, He is dragged away to the house of Caiphas the High Priest, where the doctors and Chief Priests were assembled, though the night was far advanced, waiting for Him. On answering to the judge a question concerning His doctrine, He had received a blow on the face in the court of Annas; and on confessing Himself to be the Son of God before Caiphas, He is declared guilty of death and given in custody to a band of soldiers, who spent the night in insulting Him. Meantime, St. Peter thrice denies his Lord, but on meeting the gentle glance of Jesus, he went forth and wept bitterly.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the court of Caiphas, and later in the soldiers' quarters.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg to know our Blessed Lord more clearly in His humiliations and in His excessive love and compassion for Peter, and grace to share this two-fold spirit.

Point 1.—When our Lord was asked about His doctrine, He replied in words full of heavenly wisdom, that there was nothing to fear from it; that He had always taught it publicly, and that all who heard Him,

¹ "And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the High Priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. . . . The High Priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus answered, Why asketh thou Me? ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them; behold they know what things I have said. And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answereth Thou the High Priest so? And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest." (St. John xviii. 13—24.)

of whom some were present, could bear witness to His sincerity. Then a servant, before the whole assembly, gave Him an ignominious blow!—a vile creature struck the face of the Son of the living God, causing horror in the sight of Heaven and earth. The God of infinite majesty willingly submits to this gross outrage and humiliation for our sake and for our example. Let us humble ourselves to think how we lament, murmur, and complain, if by a single word, an unmannerly action, or even by an inadvertence, we conceive ourselves aggrieved. When we see our Lord thus insulted, and no one to say a word in His defence, let us try to give Him some comfort by offering ourselves to keep Him company, and by labouring earnestly to acquire something of His unshaken mildness and heroic patience. Let us accept in silence any outrage or insult which God in His wise providence may permit us to receive.

Point 2.—In order to compass their iniquitous intent of sentencing Him to death with some outward semblance of justice, they suborn false witnesses;¹ but not even from these can His crafty and malicious judges extract grounds to condemn the evident and notorious innocence of our Blessed Lord. The groundless and incoherent calumnies of these perjurers, to which our Lord listens meekly and silently, served only to con-

¹ "And the Chief Priests and the whole Council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put Him to death, and they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came two false witnesses, and they said: This Man said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God and after three days to rebuild it. And the High Priest rising up, said to Him: Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the High Priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ the Son of God. And Jesus saith to him, Thou hast said it. . . . Then the High Priest rent his garment, saying, He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy; what think you? But they answering said, He is guilty of death." (St. Matt. xxvi. 56—66.)

found and enrage the High Priest, who started up and asked our Lord if He had nothing to say in His defence, but Jesus gives no reply. But on being adjured in the name of His Father to say whether He was the Messiah and the Son of God, then He broke silence at once, and answered fearlessly and clearly, though He knew it would cost Him His life, "I am." Upon which the hypocritical and envious High Priest rent his garment as if in horror, and declared Him a blasphemer and worthy of death, with the unanimous approval of all the assessors. Our Lord is then given up to the rude soldiers and guards, who beguiled the hours of the night in insulting and tormenting Him, striking Him and jeering at Him. With what reason have the saints, placing this scene before themselves, offered themselves to suffer injuries, calumnies, and torments, and rejoiced to suffer even death itself to promote the cause of virtue and to war against vice. When we look upon that Divine face, blackened with blows and besmeared with spittle, and yet listen in vain for a single word of reproof or complaint, let us resolve at least to bear our trials and sufferings with patience and in silence, if we cannot do so with joy, as did the Apostles who went forth from the Council rejoicing at being found worthy to suffer for Christ every contumely. But let us learn also, when God's glory requires it, to speak out boldly, to correct evil tongues, to combat false maxims, to admonish and to reprehend others, and also to defend the truth. After all it is a real honour to us that the world should treat us as it treated Jesus Christ.

Point 3.—It was through a want of this spirit that St. Peter fell.¹ It was in the court of Caiphas that,

¹ "Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the High Priest; and when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: Thou also was with Jesus of Nazareth.

when accosted first by a servant-maid and afterwards by two others, he with oaths and curses denied that he even knew our Blessed Lord. He who a short time before had made such loud protestations and spoken with such courage, and had drawn his sword to oppose a whole company of soldiers, falls disgracefully at the sound of a question. Oh, the fearful frailty of man! The stoutest pillar is all in a tremble at a breath of air.¹

At the very time when our Lord is suffering insults and ill-usage, and hears the sentence of death passed on Him, for the glory of His Divine Father, the prince of His Apostles, chosen to promote that same enterprise, abandons and denies Him through fear of suffering. Why was all this permitted? To teach us that whoever will be a companion of our Lord must nerve himself to bear hardships and crosses, or else he will basely recoil at the first encounter. But let us also consider the remote causes of his fall. And in the first place, he had been admonished by our Lord to pray and to watch, and thus prepare himself for temptation; nevertheless, he had allowed himself to give way to sleep, though twice admonished. Again, he follows our Lord at a *distance*, and from a motive of curiosity, to see how the affair would end; and lastly, he mixed with the soldiers and others, and stood with them to warm himself at the fire. All these details are not mentioned by the Evangelists without special reason, and are calculated to impress three important lessons upon us, namely—that we stand in extreme

But he denied, saying, I neither know nor understand what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court, and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him began to say to the standers-by: This is one of them. But he denied again. And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them, for thou art also a Galilean. But he began to curse and to swear, I know not this Man of whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again." (St. Mark xiv. 66—72.)

¹ St. Augustine, tr. 113.

need of constant prayer, without which all our fervour and good purposes will never enable us to resist the temptations of flesh and blood which we shall have to encounter; moreover, that if we begin to withdraw to a distance from our Lord by allowing less perfect or bad motives to influence us, such as temporal interest, worldly esteem, vanity, or self-indulgence in the discharge of the duties of our state of life, then we are on the high-road to ruin, and sooner or later shall fall into sin; and lastly, that we stand in great need of prudence and care in conversing with others. If we spend our time in idle conversation with others, in resorting to the houses of others to indulge in frivolous discourses, we shall soon imbibe worldly maxims and views, and, daunted by human respect, we shall be exposed to dispraise what we should approve and approve what we should denounce. Let us seriously examine ourselves on these three points, and if we find that we have not kept our word with God, let us turn ourselves to our Lord as Peter did. Let us break off all ties, withdraw from all dangerous occasions, and shed bitter tears over the life we have led heretofore; and in our colloquies let us implore the grace of keeping our resolution to imitate our Lord in bearing silently and meekly the ignominy and contempt which in His providence He may call upon us to undergo.

End with "Our Father."

JESUS SPENDS THE NIGHT IN PRISON.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Jesus was led from the tribunal of Caiphas to the dungeon, to pass the rest of the night. On His way thither He met the gaze of Peter, who thereupon went away and wept bitterly. Jesus was detained all night in the prison, and was subjected to most infamous outrages.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the cold, cheerless prison, and observe what passes.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly the grace of intense sorrow and compassion for our dear Lord's sufferings, and grace to offer ourselves to share them with Him, if it shall be for His glory and for our sanctification.

Point 1.—Repentance of Peter.—If Peter had not met the eye of Jesus, if he had not thereby been favoured with preventing grace, or had failed to co-operate with it, he would never have repented, and, like Judas, would have been lost, as it is certain that of himself the sinner cannot rise from his sin, or become reconciled to God, unless he be overtaken by the grace of God, and assisted by it.

Both Peter and Judas had sinned grievously. The former had more than once denied his Lord, and had confirmed his denial by false oaths and curses, and this

¹ "And the men that held Him, mocked Him and struck Him. And they blindfolded Him and smote His face; and they asked Him, saying, Prophecy who it is that struck Thee. And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him." (St. Luke xxv. 63–65.)

"And some began to spit upon Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy; and the servants struck Him with the palms of their hands." (St. Mark xiv. 65.)

"Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others struck His face with the palm of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" (St. Matt. xxvi. 67, 68.)

he did to save his life. He did it out of a craven fear, when challenged by a common servant-maid. But after all he had an ardent love of Jesus; he had been true and loyal to Jesus in all His adversities; but unfortunately, on a critical occasion, and in circumstances of imminent danger, out of sheer weakness and not through any malice, he sinned and denied the Master whom he loved. It was far otherwise with Judas. Out of malice, and love of money, and to court favour with those invested with authority, wealth, and influence in Jerusalem, he took deliberate steps to hand over Jesus to His enemies, hiding his plans under a thick veil of hypocrisy, abusing the great graces all the while which God was showering down upon him, yielding himself up as a victim to the predominant passion of avarice, embezzling moneys from the common purse under the false pretext of zeal for the relief of the poor. The consequence of all these prevarications was loss of faith in our Blessed Lord or in His teaching, and of all love or admiration for His Person. He perished miserably by his own hand, goaded on by despair of forgiveness.

Let us admire the generosity, the love, and magnificent mercy of our dear Lord in looking upon Peter. How well and quickly did the conscience-stricken Apostle read in that look the tender and forgiving and compassionate feelings of his Master's Heart! And at once he went out, smitten with anguish, which could only relieve itself by floods of hot and bitter tears. He remembers all the marks of love and kindness which he had received from his Master; all the promises He had made to him; all the confidence which that Master had reposed in him; all of which pierced his repentant heart with fresh wounds, causing him renewed sorrow, shame, and confusion; added to which the consciousness that he was forgiven filled up the cup

of his affliction, and perfected his contrition. Truly "the Lord is good to them that trust in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." "Oh, how sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord!" Who would ever sin if he once realized the goodness and loving mercy of the Heart of Jesus? Who would mistrust Him, if he knew the generosity of that noble Heart, even though he may have sinned a thousand times?

Point 2.—Jesus remained in His bonds the whole night.—Let us contemplate our Jesus with His hands bound tightly behind Him, a rope round His neck, exhausted by fatigue, hungry, and parched with thirst, harassed by His persecutors, who allow Him not a moment of repose; yet amidst all the outrages heaped upon Him, He is meek, gentle, patient, and humble; he utters not a word of remonstrance or complaint. Who is it that undergoes all this cruelty? The Lord and Master of the universe! before whom countless hosts in Heaven are prostrate in adoration, and whose praises are ringing through the vaults of Heaven; He whose hands, though fastened with ropes, support the firmament, and were ever opened to confer blessings; which healed the leper, restored sight to the blind, opened the ears of the deaf, loosed the limbs of the paralytic, bestowed life on the dead, multiplied bread to feed the hungry! Learn here how to despise the world, which teaches its slaves to treat our Jesus with such wicked ingratitude; learn too what you have to expect for all your labours and sacrifices, if you look here below for your reward. The disciple is not above his master, nor the slave above his lord; if they have treated Jesus thus, they will treat those that are His true followers no better.

But why, dear Lord, would you be so bound and crippled? Was it not in order that He might free us from the chains of sin and from the slavery of the devil? Or that He might purchase for us the noble and exalted

freedom which consists in the service of God, and the liberty of the children of God? Or perhaps by His example to give courage, energy, and gladness to the martyrs, and to those who for His sake will incur chains and dungeon horrors! Or to make expiation for the sins of licence and independence, the vices of our age? It was for each and all these reasons that He cheerfully, with a big Heart and ready will, welcomed His bonds. O my soul! and what have we done to show our gratitude to our Blessed Lord? What are we ready to do for the time to come? What have we elected to do during this retreat, and what means have we provided to secure fidelity to that election?

Make colloquy with Jesus.

Point 3.—He spends the night in prison.—Let us keep our dear Lord company during that terrible night. When one is sick and in pain, how slowly the hours drag along; it would seem as if the finger of time had ceased to move, as if the day will never dawn again! But if to pain of body is added the racking of the mind and the torments of a breaking heart, then time appears to come to a standstill. So was it with Jesus. Wearied and worn, faint and exhausted, trembling with cold in the damp chill of a spring night in a chamber into which no ray of sunshine could ever penetrate, He is subjected to infamies which men will never know until the Day of Judgment. Contemplate these minions of the priests and Pharisees, with what wanton cruelty and shamelessness they flout His blessed Face, strike His Sacred Body, spit upon Him, pluck His beard. Hear how they call Him foul and injurious names, blaspheme Him, turn Him to ridicule, and make the chamber ring with their loud and vulgar laughter. See how they wrap a rag over His eyes, and when they deal blows at Him they mock Him, and bid Him say

who it was that struck Him. Yet He, from whose sight nothing is hidden, appears as though He knew not, answers not a word. O my soul, let us bow down and adore Him, let us try to comfort Him and to make some amends. It is for us, for our sins, for love of us, that He has endured all this. Oh, let us love Him in return. But not with lip-love—it is not that which will satisfy Jesus. That indeed may pass muster with your fellow-men, who cannot read the heart and give you credit for sincerity; but let us remember that Jesus sees and reads the heart, and it is heart's love and heart's service which alone will satisfy Him. Why should not this sight inspire us with the same sentiments with which it filled the saints, who loved for Christ's sake to be unknown, despised, persecuted?¹ May God grant it.

Let us make a fervent colloquy to our dear Lord, and say the *Anima Christi*. End with "Our Father."

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.²

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord having been declared by the Council worthy of death, was taken before the tribunal of Pilate that the sentence might be put in execution by his authority. There He observed a profound

¹ Isaias liii. ; Psalm xxi. 7.

² "And straightway in the morning the Chief Priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes and the whole Council, binding Jesus, led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate. And Pilate asked Him: Art Thou the King of the Jews? But He answering him saith: Thou sayest it. And the Chief Priests accused Him in many things. And Pilate again asked Him, saying: Answerest Thou nothing? behold in how many things they accuse Thee. But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate wondered." (St. Mark xv. 1—5. Comp. St. Luke xxiii. ; St. Matt. xxvii. ; St. John xviii.)

silence, under the most horrid calumnies, and only breaks this silence when asked if He was "King of the Jews," when He declared that He was the true Messiah. Afterwards He was compared with Barabbas, the robber and assassin, and was postponed to him, and is condemned, though known to be innocent, to be crucified.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves in the court of Pilate, &c.

Prelude 3.—Conscious of having postponed our Lord to our sins, and full of compassion for Him and of shame and confusion for ourselves, let us beg great contempt for ourselves, whose guilt is the true cause of all His ignominy and dishonour.

Point 1.—Early in the morning the priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council led our Lord in chains to the court of Pilate, through the very streets along which the crowd had conducted Him in triumph only four days before; but now fettered and bound as a malefactor and blasphemer; and this too by the priests and learned and reputedly holy men of the city. But listen to the charges urged against Him! He has disturbed the peace, causing tumult and sedition among the people. He has forbidden the people to pay tribute to Cæsar. He has aspired to be King, repeatedly giving Himself out for the Messiah. Jesus all meekness, stands manacled in the presence of Pilate, with eyes modestly cast down, listening in profound silence, not uttering a word in His defence, insomuch that Pilate was struck with intense wonder. And yet the charges referred to very grave points, namely, to sedition, to actual rebellion against the Roman authority and to ambitious usurpation. How eloquently does this silence appeal to us! Our Lord had taught His disciples to despise all worldly honour, to bear willingly injuries and humiliations, and now He resolves by this public example to leave no

room for human pride to pretend an excuse for the contrary. He a God, innocence and sanctity itself, appears as a criminal, a seducer, and as one only worthy of death, nevertheless He will be silent and will not utter one word in self-defence, even though with a simple sentence of His infinite wisdom He could have dissipated and confuted these black calumnies, as easily as by a simple word He created the light of heaven. And yet we, if admonished in a gentle and kindly spirit by Superiors or friends for our own good, defend ourselves, look for apologies, or ingeniously palliate our faults, consider ourselves falsely misrepresented, or our faults grossly exaggerated. And we excuse our remonstrances on the ground that otherwise our honour will suffer and some prejudice or detriment may accrue to us from silence. But was not the honour, nay, the very life of our Lord, of infinitely greater importance than the honour and life of all men put together, and yet He suffered in patience and silence as though He were a criminal.

Let us not delude ourselves on this point, for it shows but little progress in virtue; nay, it would be a great delusion to be too touchy and sensitive on this point, to which after all we are bound by our engagements and of which our Lord has given us such an example.

Point 2.—Pilate took Jesus aside,¹ and considering the charge of His aspiring to be King as the most important, he put the question to Him, "Art Thou a King?" Our Lord in reply gave an account of Himself and told him that His Kingdom was not a temporal

¹ "Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus and said to Him: Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee up to me; what hast Thou done? Jesus answered: My Kingdom is not of this world." (St. John xviii. 33—36.)

one and that He wanted nothing of this world; and that He was born and came into this world to give testimony to the truth. This so convinced Pilate of His innocence that he returned to the people and declared he could find no fault in Him. Here is a lesson for those who as priests are often accused of interfering in secular and political matters; let us convince men by our conduct, that our kingdom is not of this world, that our thoughts and interests are far other, that our one ambition in life is to promote the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and to make known to men the great and sovereign truth, God. In this way we shall confound our enemies, and it will be said of us, "I find no case against this man." The world expects from us that we shall endeavour with might and main to denounce abuses, to rebuke the ungodly, and to promote the cause of virtue; and as long as we regulate our efforts to these ends it will, it is true, oppose us, though at heart it will admire our honesty and single-mindedness; but once let it see that we entertain secular views, seek temporal interests, and meddle in worldly affairs, rest assured that it will begin to persecute and calumniate us; therefore let the dead bury their dead.

Point 3.—Pilate, seeing the innocence of Jesus,¹ tries like a time-server and a slave of human respect to save Him. He proposed then to release Him at the Pasch, as he was accustomed at that time each year to set

¹ "Now upon the solemn day the Governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas. They, therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ? for he knew that for envy they had delivered Him. . . . But the Chief Priests and ancients persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the Governor answering, said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas." (St. Matt. xxvii. 15—21.)

free one criminal, at the choice of the people. Now if the choice lies between the notorious Barabbas and Jesus, he presumes that they will choose the latter. What a fearful outrage! to put the innocent, gentle, meek Son of God in comparison with the robber, murderer, and seditious villain! Nevertheless passion, envy, and hatred so blinded the priests, scribes, and people, that with one voice they called for Barabbas, and as to Jesus they insisted that He should be crucified, and that His Blood should be upon them and on their descendants. Oh, how deep a wound does this cause to the heart of every right-minded man! what hot tears does it not draw from those who remember that as often as they have committed grievous sin, they too have joined in the cry, "Not this Man, but Barabbas"—that sensuality, carnal love, or worldly pride, excited us to abandon our dear Lord, and hand Him over to His and our enemies, crucifying Him again and making a mockery of Him.

And our crime is all the greater (than that of the Jews, for they did not know fully what they were doing; had they known they would never have crucified the Lord,¹ whereas we know what we do when we render the sufferings of Jesus not only useless, but actually turn them to our greater criminality, and all for the degrading gratification of our own inordinate inclinations, thus squandering His Most Precious Blood. And all this our dear Lord saw when He suffered, and yet He cheerfully accepted it all for us; and would if necessary undergo it all again through His undying love for us. What then shall we do in return? Alas! hitherto we have done but little. Will it be too much to drink the chalice with Him? It may be bitter to our natural taste, but love and gratitude will make it

¹ "For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

sweet, and by persevering and fervent prayer we shall be able to do it.

In our colloquy we will pray that His Sacred Blood may fall into our hearts and may produce a contrite and humble spirit there. End with "Our Father."

JESUS BEFORE HEROD.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Pilate's efforts to free our Lord proving ineffectual, he sends Him to Herod, the cruel and incestuous Tetrarch of Galilee. The mob all along the way shouted and cried out against Him and forced their way into the judgment-hall of Herod. Our Lord made no reply either to the accusations of the priests or to the manifold questions of the Tetrarch; consequently in his disappointment and rage he brands our Lord as a fool, and orders a fool's white garment to be put on Him, and contemptuously sends Him back to Pilate.

Prelude 2.—Let us accompany our Lord on the way to and from Herod.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg this spirit of self-abasement and humility.

Point 1.—Let us compare Herod and our Lord. Herod, swelled with pride, stern, haughty, and cruel, surrounded by his guards: Jesus, standing meek and

¹ "But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the Man were of Galilee? And when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days. And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad, for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him: and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered nothing. . . . And Herod and his army set Him at nought: and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate." (St. Luke xxiii. 6, xi.)

gentle, His hands bound with fetters. Herod, anxious to see his prisoner, as if He were a magician and desirous to witness some specimens of His wonderful power. Jesus had hitherto refused to indulge his curiosity by proclaiming His heavenly doctrines or working any miracles before him, until He appears in his presence in the ignominious attitude of a criminal arraigned on the capital charge of sacrilege. Here our Lord gives us a lesson to contemn vainglory and worldly honour, by being vilified and despised, when He could, had He chosen, have made such a glorious figure. When shall we learn this lesson? When shall we practically convince ourselves of this great truth inculcated by the doctrine and example of our Lord, that worldly glory and esteem is a great obstacle to the glory of God and to our real welfare? It is a delusion to make a parade of our birth, talents, and erudition; to make a show of poverty which yet must be fine and genteel. Self-contempt, poverty, modesty, humility in words and deeds are the true dispositions for great exploits in the cause of God and of souls, and remove from us countless dangers and temptations of sin.

Point 2.—Let us consider how, probably, Herod began in a friendly manner, as may be inferred from the narration, to propose to our Lord many questions, and very likely suggested to Him to perform some one of His usual prodigies, in order to rescue Himself from the hands of His enemies: but as though He did not hear, our Lord made no answer. Meanwhile the priests and scribes loudly accused Him, but without evoking the slightest word or action on His part. On many other occasions He had spoken so eloquently, as to draw crowds after Him and charm them with His words, and had wrought countless miracles in favour of others, but now, when it would save Him from death, He will not say a word or work a miracle. He

will speak and act when His Father's glory is at stake, but not for Himself, or to satisfy idle curiosity, or to frustrate His design to suffer for our sakes and through love for us. Oh! again a great lesson for us, to lie low, be silent, try to be unnoticed except when called on to come forward in the cause of God and our neighbour. Yet do we not seek the more conspicuous functions and posts and places? And fly from those wherein there is little display and much labour and suffering? A sure sign that we seek ourselves and our own glory, but certainly not the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Point 3.—Herod was disappointed and indignant, and vented his rage in contemptuous words; despised our Lord as a fool, and together with his guards made game of Him; ordered them to throw a white sheet on Him as if He was an idiot, and sent Him back to Pilate, the mob all the way scoffing, laughing, and jeering at Him. The infinite and eternal wisdom, the wisest being that ever trod the earth, is deemed and treated as a fool! Oh! poor world. O world, mad indeed and depraved in its judgments! O world! it is thus thou treatest the Sovereign Master of the world. Oh! who can be such a fool and traitor to our Lord as to court the esteem and favour of that which so treated Him. Who so cowardly as to care for its condemnation and not despise and shun its approbation?

Let us make three fervent colloquies, imploring the grace to love and reduce to practice the third degree of humility. End with "Our Father."

THE FLAGELLATION.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—When our Lord was brought back to Pilate, this weak and cowardly knave, knowing His innocence and at the same time seeing all the avenues closed against His acquittal, devised an infamous plan whereby to escape the execution of his innocent Victim. He will have Him whipped to such an extent that the sight of Him will force the hearts of His enemies to pity, and their hatred will be appeased and they will let Him go. Jesus therefore is stripped in the court of Pilate and scourged.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present at the execution.

Prelude 3.—Let us pray for great feelings of compassion and great horror of our sins, which have inflicted this agony on our Lord.

Point 1.—*The quality of this torment.*—It was the first bodily torment inflicted on our Lord, but in the intent of the judge and in the desires of the Jews, it was also to be the last. For Pilate had resolved to release Him after it was over, and therefore the Jews hoped that He would not be able to survive it.

We will try to imagine the rage and fury of the executioners, instigated as they were partly by the devil, and partly by the desire to win the applause of the priests and people, and probably by the bribes of the Scribes and Pharisees,² whose rage and jealousy and thirst for His Blood were all the more fierce from having been so long resisted and controlled by authority.

¹ "Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him." (St. John xix. 1.)

² Suarez, t. 2. pt. 3. disp. 35; à Lapide, in Matt. xxvii.

Our Lord sees Himself encircled by this dense mass of infuriated people all thirsting for His Blood, and anxious to see Him writhing under the lash, and like hounds ravenous to tear their prey to pieces, while He, all meek and gentle, offers Himself for the scourging.¹

Let us reflect here on the terrible violence of unbridled passions, which blind the judgment and harden the heart and drag us into the most loathsome excesses, and lead us to discharge on the tender Body of our dear Lord a storm of blows and scourges, as many in number as are the sins we have committed by the indulgence of our unlawful appetites. That we might satisfy these we have not hesitated to ill-use our God. Let us with lively sorrow detest our past blindness and cruelty, and through gratitude towards Him who has suffered so much from and for us, we will offer up to Him the inclination which is most violent and predominant in us, with a firm purpose to sacrifice it for His sake.

Point 2.—The manner of the Scourging.—Our gracious Lord was stripped of His clothes and tied to the pillar, and was thus ignominiously made the butt of the scoffs and jeers of the impudent and shameless rabble; and moreover, this form of punishment was dishonourable and infamous, being reserved by Roman law for *slaves* and the vilest persons. We could not bear to see a dumb beast cruelly whipped; how then could we bear to see not a slave, not a criminal, but the Son of God, our delicate and virgin Jesus, innocence and holiness itself, the worthiest and most beautiful Being that Heaven and earth have ever seen, condemned to be treated worse than a malefactor, worse than even a dog! to be whipped without any measure or law, and where the sole aim is to give full vent to rage and fury on His delicate Body; moreover, where the executioners

¹ "Behold I am ready for the scourges." (Psalm xxxvii. 18.)

vie with each other who shall be the most inhuman and shall win the loudest applause, and who have been bribed to do their worst. As to the quality of the scourges, the Evangelists do not specify, but it is believed the first were whip-cord lashes, and the others thorn-switches—the first causing the Body to become black and blue, the other puncturing and tearing the flesh in countless places, and causing the Blood to gush out in streams.

But of what was our dear Lord thinking all the while, with bended Head and eyes fixed on the ground? How loudly does His Sacred Heart speak to His Heavenly Father, and how eloquently does It appeal to Him in our behalf! offering up to Him His stripes, His Wounds, and His Precious Blood, for us His cruel but fondly-loved children, that we may gain forgiveness and may make a return of love, when we shall know to what an excess He has loved us by the excess of pain and shame which He here endured for us.

Sometimes we are inclined to think, when we are exhorted to lead a more retired life, to be more earnest in mortifying our passions and subduing our inclinations, to be more observant of our rules, more assiduous in our studies, and the rest, that too much is required of us. Oh, let us look at the poor Body of our dear Lord, so mangled, torn, and butchered for us! He might at the first stroke have cried out, "Hold, that is enough." But this He would not do; but with His bended Head and motionless tongue, His Heart proclaims His readiness, bids them strike on, plough His Body, drain off His Blood. Yes, He will suffer all most readily for the love of our souls, which are so dear to Him, and for their salvation. What a shame and what ingratitude it is on our side to do so little or nothing for Him who has suffered so much pain and ignominy for us! How mean and unworthy for us to stand

weighing what is of obligation and what is not, and to account that we do too much by the too little that we do. Let us offer up our good-will and a firm resolution to do for His sake whatever we can, in a generous spirit, and let us beg Him to give us grace to make that sacrifice at least, which in our election He let us know that He required of us.

Point 3.—The end of our Lord in undergoing this torment was to make satisfaction for the sins of the flesh so common in the world, and for those gross pleasures and gratifications of the vice of impurity. Many were the scourges which these sins deserved—*multa flagella peccatoris*—and these our dear Lord would receive on His Body—*multa flagella redemptoris*—that we might thus escape. When we behold our dear Lord lying half dead at the pillar, all mangled and bleeding, it should recall to our minds those words: “As the eagle hovering over her young, He hath spread out His wings and hath taken them and carried them on His shoulders.”¹ Jesus stretched over us the wings of His love, a love immense and incomprehensible, and received on His Body the strokes of Divine justice prepared to fall on us vile wretches; He is battered and bruised and mangled by a very storm of scourges, that we might be left free and sound. Surely, if we do not feel broken-hearted at the thought, we can have no heart at all.

Another end of our dear Lord was to give us an example how we ought to treat this body of ours. He was most innocent and most holy, and His Body was perfectly subject to His Spirit and to reason; nevertheless He would suffer in His Body in atonement for our sins. Now if He would thus reduce His flesh, what usage should not we, who have been guilty of so many sins, deal out to our bodies—to our flesh, which

¹ Deut. xxxii. 11.

exposes us to so many risks of committing new sins? In what manner should we chastise it and subject it to the spirit, to reason, and to faith? The saints at the thought of this mystery conceived a holy hatred of their bodies: it caused them to bear about them the mortification of Jesus; and seeing Christ in suffering, they armed themselves with the same thought.¹ Wherefore, at the feet of Jesus scourged, let us make an act of contrition, and consider what penances to adopt in future, unwilling to be without a wound when we see Him so wounded. "A devoted soldier does not heed his own wounds when he looks at the wounds of his beloved general."²

End with "Our Father."

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.³

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The soldiers, after scourging our Lord, invented a cruel sport, which was to crown Him King. They therefore seated Him on a stone, threw over His shoulders a cast-off red military cloak, put a reed in place of a sceptre, and a wreath of thorns on His Head for a crown, and then brutally amused themselves by paying Him mock homage and striking Him on the Head.

Prelude 2.—Let us humbly place ourselves beside Him.

¹ 1 St. Peter iv. 1.

² St. Bernard, Serm. on Cantic.

³ "And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon His Head, and they put on Him a purple garment. And they came to Him and said: Hail, King of the Jews. And they gave Him blows. Pilate therefore went forth again and saith to them: Behold, I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him. Jesus therefore came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them, Behold the Man." (St. John xix. 2—5.)

Prelude 3.—Let us pray that we may imitate His patience and humility.

Point 1.—The pain of this torment we may infer, *first*, from the quality of the thorns, which were sea-rushes, which are long, hard, and sharp;¹ *secondly*, from the number of these thorns, which must have been great, as the crown was not a fillet, but covered the whole Head;² *thirdly*, from the manner in which they put it on, pressing it close down, and driving the thorns in with blows from short, thick sticks; *fourthly*, from the duration of this torment, as He carried it to His Death.³ Imagine, then, what pain and agony it must have caused! A bad headache almost drives us wild, and any wound of the brain is very grave and painful on account of the countless veins, nerves, and delicate membranes collected there. Oh, who then can conceive the terrible agony of that dreadful crown! Oh, let us thank Him for having suffered so much for us; let us offer up the Precious Blood thus spilt for our sins to the Eternal Father, as a satisfaction for our countless vain, proud, and impure thoughts. Which of us is not obliged to confess that he has driven in not one, but many thorns, and has often pressed and driven them deeper in? But as we look at this Head crowned thus, what resolutions should we make? To embrace cheerfully troubles, hardships, absence of comforts and conveniences, and contempt, and to try to esteem them as a crown of glory, in order to resemble our Heavenly King. Let the children of this world seek diversions, delicacies, and pleasures, and crown themselves with roses: it is not strange, for such is its spirit; but for those who belong to the Body of Christ and bear His Name, theirs is the crown of pains and sorrows, for *non decet sub capite spinoso membrum esse delicatum*; and when

¹ Suarez, Toletus, and Baronius.

² Suarez.

³ Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian.

these thorns smart and sting our hearts, the thought of Jesus will soothe and blunt them.

Point. 2.—Let us consider the ignominy of this torment. It seems from the relation of the Evangelists that the sole aim of the soldiers was to throw ridicule on the Kingship of our Lord. Wherefore, by way also of diverting themselves and pleasing the Jews, who accused Him of calling Himself a King, they resolved to crown Him as such. They therefore place Him in the courtyard, where the rest of the soldiers were mustered, strip Him again, and reopen His fearful Wounds—a sight sufficient to horrify and melt the hardest heart—they seat Him on a stone, and put the reed in His hand, and a purple rag on His shoulders, and a cap of thorns on His Blessed Head, which they pressed down so heavily that the Blood spurted forth copiously. Then the monsters began to scoff and sneer at Him and blaspheme Him; they knelt down before Him, took the reed and hit Him on the Head with it, and spat their phlegm on His face, and in this way they ridiculed Him and blasphemously insulted Him till they were satiated.

Now, let us reflect that this seemingly wretched creature is no other than the Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who sitteth upon an eternal throne in Heaven, and at that very time was being adored by countless hosts of mighty and blessed spirits, at whose beck stands ready to obey even inanimate creation, and at whose presence the heavens and the earth tremble. This is the Person who, out of love for us, vile and ungrateful though we are, will be hailed as a mock-King, will be cuffed, kicked, spat upon, and outraged. But if we have any faith and gratitude, we shall not gaze with idle wonder, but in His Divine face we shall see as in a mirror the deformity of our pride and vanity, and the excellence of humiliations and

contempt; we shall fly from the first suggestions of pride as being the source and origin of sin, the cause of the transformation of angels into devils, and the introducer of death and every misery into the world. Truly it is a terrible evil, seeing that to atone for it our Lord would undergo such torment and ignominy.

Let us examine and see how many faults and failings we commit owing to this vice, and, remembering how infinitely worthy we are of all contempt, let us beg of the Father to look upon the face of His Christ, and by its merits to grant us the virtue of true humility, so that having joy set before us, we may choose the shame, and ambition to be thus likened to His ever-Blessed Son.

Point 3.—"The soldiers came before Him and said, Hail, King of the Jews." Though in derision, yet the cruel soldiers confess Jesus to be a King: but His Kingdom is not of the earth, it is of souls which He has won by His Precious Blood, by which also He has subverted the kingdom of Lucifer and of sin. He came into the world to bring it under subjection, and so to enter into His Father's glory. He has called us to follow Him, to labour with Him, to suffer with Him, that so with Him we may be glorified. We have hailed Him as our King, and have pledged ourselves to take the offensive (*agendo contra*) against self-indulgence, against inordinate love of our friends and relatives, or of the things of this world. See here how our King carries out His intention, what He endures to secure the victory, to establish His Father's Kingdom in our souls. We have offered to share His lot: how have we hitherto kept our promise? Do we not resent the slightest injury? Are we not disappointed if our words or actions do not meet with approval or praise? Do we not betray our miserable vanity by talking of self, or by undue attachment to our person and dress? Is it

thus we flatter ourselves we are followers of our King and Captain? O my soul, let us seriously enter into ourselves, and resolve to be honest in our professions of allegiance, and uncompromising in putting them into execution. With St. Augustine, let us be filled with shame at our past insincerity, and with him let us say, "Too late, O my Jesus, have we learnt to know Thee, too late have we loved Thee."

End with "Our Father."

JESUS IS DELIVERED UP TO BE CRUCIFIED.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Pilate makes various efforts to set Jesus free. He strives to soften their hearts by showing Him to the multitude: he then declares His innocence; but

¹ "Pilate therefore went forth again and said to them: Behold I bring Him forth to you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him. Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them: Behold the Man. When the Chief Priests therefore and the servants had seen Him, they cried out, saying: Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Take Him you and crucify Him: for I find no cause in Him. The Jews answered him: We have a law: and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus: Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave no answer. . . . From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this Man thou art no friend of Cæsar: for whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar. Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your King. But they cried out: Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your King? The Chief Priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them for to be crucified." (St. John xix. 4—16.)

finally, through motives of fear and of selfishness, he solemnly condemns Him to death, with the same breath by which he acknowledges Him innocent.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture ourselves present amongst the crowd.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg of God that we may know our dear Lord more intimately in this mystery of His Passion, that so our hearts may be melted with love and compassion for His sufferings, and may be more imbued with His Spirit.

Point 1.—*Pilate shows Jesus to the people.*—Let us contemplate Pilate, the slave of human respect, and full of remorse at the consciousness of his criminal conduct, leading Jesus, the innocent, gentle Lamb of God, and showing Him to the multitude: *Ecce homo*—"Behold the Man:" His Body all bruised and bloody; His hair matted, His beard torn, His Head crowned with thorns, His eyes swelled and all but closed, His hands still bound, and His Body partially covered with a red garment. The dreadful sight caused the multitude to be dumb with horror, and they would have spared Him, had not the Chief Priests raised the cry, "Crucify Him."

Let us behold the Man, and see what our sins have made of Him: "From the sole of His feet to the crown of His Head, there is not a sound place in Him." "He is a worm and not a man, the reproach of men, the outcast of the people." And yet let us penetrate this terrible outside covering, and look at His Soul. Oh! what a magnificent intellect is there concealed, full of the sublimest, noblest thoughts and designs, and all for our benefit, for our salvation, for our future glory! But nobler far, more sublime, more beautiful His devoted, grand and loving Heart! Not all this deluge of affliction, nor all man's ingratitude, can succeed in extinguishing the love in that breaking Heart.

Let us behold the Man. Though apparently so helpless, He has the power, if He chooses, to scatter that multitude as the wind whirls the autumn leaves through the air: if He chooses, He can at once restore the wreck of His Body to all its beauty, as it appeared when He was transfigured upon the mount. If He only wished it, He could summon the Angel of death to come and spread the stillness of death over the brawling multitude: but Jesus loves us too much for that. "He hath loved us, and will deliver Himself to the death for us." "His love is strong as, yea, stronger than death." We shall all of us upon a day have to behold the Man, when He will appear in great power and majesty; and then His enemies will cry out, not for His crucifixion, but for the hills to come and crush them, to hide them from the face of His justice and power. Let us with the eyes of faith behold the Man, and fall down and adore Him, and beg of Him to give us grace to put on His livery and follow after Him. Such is our law, in opposition to the law of this wicked world, which would put Him to death because He maketh Himself what He is, the Son of God.

Point 2.—Pilate again questions Jesus.—Then Pilate questions Him again about His origin, and asks Him who He really is: but Jesus does not answer. Were He to declare His Divinity, Pilate might not understand, or might refuse to act, and so would be more guilty, or perhaps our Blessed Lord refused him this grace, because he had already refused to hear the truth.¹ Embarrassed by His silence, Pilate tries to extort an answer by menace and promise. "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to set Thee free?" Our Lord then replied, acknowledging his power, but warns him against abusing it, as he will have to answer for it to Him from

¹ St. John xviii. 38.

whom all power is derived. The truth of these words, uttered with perfect calmness, intrepidity, sweetness, and majesty by our dear Lord, struck deep into the soul of Pilate and filled him with terror and dismay. His conscience stings him, and he resolves at all cost to release Him. Our Blessed Lord has given him the grace to do his duty; but he will again abuse it. So is it with the slaves of a predominant passion. God is perpetually offering them grace to amend, to overcome; they resolve to overcome, to set themselves free; but alas! they will not take the means required, and so continue to abuse God's mercy, until at length that mercy is turned into justice.

But let us also look to ourselves. If through God's protecting love and mercy we are not the enemies of our dear Lord, may we not in a certain sense be inclined to imitate too closely the conduct of Pilate. We know what God demands from us, what sacrifice He requires from us, that we may correspond more perfectly with His grace, and thereby attain a higher perfection in our state of life. We have the power given to us from above to make the sacrifice, and we feel that we shall have to answer for the abuse of that power hereafter, yet how often like Pilate do we seek to do our duty, and through our want of honesty and thoroughness, through fear of what it may cost us, do we fail, and put off the resolution to another time, which perhaps may never come? In this we imitate the conduct of those whom St. Ignatius puts in the second category in the "Three Classes," and cut ourselves off from the true peace and happiness which belongs alone to those of the third class.

Point 3.—The final sentence.—The Chief Priests at length had recourse to the last means of forcing Pilate to pass sentence on Jesus. This was a threat to impeach him of encouraging high treason against

Cæsar. Of all charges this was the most formidable in the reign of Tiberius. Pilate had already been accused of causing great discontent and frequent revolt. If now he was charged with fostering treason, his doom would be sealed. By this artful, obstinate, disloyal means, did their implacable hatred succeed in stifling all sentiments of justice and humanity in the heart of Pilate. He yields to personal interest, to human respect and cowardice, and consents with the High Priests to murder the Son of God. Let us contemplate the feelings of our dear Jesus as He silently witnesses all that is passing. What must have been His sorrow and anguish as He reflected on the black ingratitude and fierce hatred of all ranks of His countrymen, clamouring for His death by torture; on the woes which their crime of deicide would bring upon their city and nation; on the manner in which Pilate betrays his duty and acts against his conscience. And this to Him who never wronged any one, who did good to all, showering down His blessings wheresoever He went; to Him who was their Lord, their Messiah, their God. And in the whole of that vast crowd there was not one to raise his voice in the cause of justice or to cry shame! What had He done to this people, or in what had He made them sad? What ought He to have done, and had not done it? Oh! who can care for the opinion or esteem of this blind and perverted world? This world which is seated in wickedness? To care for it or its judgments is dishonourable, is disloyalty to our King and Captain, Jesus Christ.

“Then Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they desired, and Jesus he delivered up to their will.” Let us picture to ourselves the cries of triumph of the High Priests, the wild howls of the rude mob now that they had got the Victim in their power: let us see how they vie with each other in ridiculing Him, striking

Him, spitting upon Him, and mocking at Him. Like lightning the rumour spread through the city, and the crowds all hurried towards Golgotha, anxious to feast their eyes and sate their thirst for blood on the sight of His terrible death. Oh, what a sickening sight! The wrath of God hath come upon our Jesus, the terrors of God's justice have troubled Him. The sorrows of death have surrounded Him, the torrents of iniquity have burst upon Him. The sorrows of Hell have encompassed Him, the snares of death have prevented Him: yet He is firm and unshaken, like a rock in the midst of roaring waters, calm, resigned, and glad at the approach of the moment when by His Death He will put the seal on the constancy of His love, and will make adequate reparation for the offence of His Father's justice. Oh, what must have been the feelings of His Blessed Mother, who, with the penitent Mary and the other pious women under the guidance of the Beloved Disciple, made her way to the place of execution. Mind cannot conceive, much less can tongue express, the pangs that racked that Mother's soul. To see her only Child, her only Son, and such a Son, intellectually, morally, and physically the paragon of humanity, so patient, uncomplaining, obedient, humble, under the most cruel, unjust, and heartless torments inflicted upon Him by His own ungrateful creatures, whom He still loves and will love until the bitter end. Yet she proves herself worthy to be the Mother of her heroic Child, and in her agony of grief she is resigned, and the prayer of her soul is, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me: yet if it must be that I drink, not my will but Thine be done." Like a grand high priestess she willingly offers her Jesus to be the sin-offering and the peace-offering for mankind. Next to the sublime figure of her Son, rising above the boisterous sea of sorrow, unshaken stands the sublime

figure of His Mother. *Eja mater fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris, fac ut tecum lugeam.* Oh, let us join our Blessed Mother in this awful hour, let us try to comfort and console her, let us be filled with intense sorrow and confusion at the thought that we are the cause of all this woeful scene, "for He loved me, He delivered Himself for me," and let us beg that we may take up the Spirit of Jesus, and thus in some way make amends to her for the Son of whom we robbed her. *Fiat, fiat.*

Let us make a triple colloquy, to our Blessed Mother, to our Lord, and to the Eternal Father. End with "Our Father."

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Pilate hands our Lord over to the Jews, who refuse to have Him for their King: they load Him with the Cross, which is afterwards borne by Simon of Cyrene—they then nail Him to the Cross between two thieves.

Prelude 2.—Let us accompany our Lord on His way to execution.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that we may know our Lord in His Crucifixion, that we may love Him intensely, and be made one with Him on the Cross.

Point 1.—As the Jews persisted in demanding the Crucifixion, Pilate at length gives our Lord up to them to work their will on Him, though he knew that He was innocent, and at the same time suspected that He was more than man, for his wife had been much

¹ "And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your King. But they cried out: Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your King? The Chief Priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them to be crucified." (St. John xix. 14—16.)

troubled in her sleep, and had admonished him to have no hand in the death of this just Man. He was also afraid because our Lord had warned him of his sin, though He had added it was less than that of the Jews, who were the chief authors and promoters of His Death: nevertheless, despite his knowledge, his fears, and the stings of his conscience and the warnings he had received, he still sacrilegiously condemns the Lord God to be crucified, afraid lest if he refused he might forfeit his office and the friendship of Cæsar. Oh, to what crimes will miserable human respect lead a man! The mind becomes blinded, the will paralyzed, and laws, human and divine, are trodden underfoot, rather than displease or disappoint a friend. So, too, it is often through human respect and fear of losing or hurting a friend that we encourage undue affections and disregard rules: that through fear of scoffs or raillery, or of being boycotted, we continue in a tepid and indifferent course of life. Let us dread this mean and cowardly vice of human respect, for after all it begot a deicide and caused the Death of God made Man. And, on the other hand, let us look at what passes in the Soul of our sweet Lord as He hears Himself given up to His inhuman foes. How meek and gentle, how perfectly resigned to the will of His Heavenly Father, and calmly and courageously He accepts the sentence and faces His terrible Death.

*Point 2.—The way from the City to Calvary.*¹—At once the Jews bring forth the instrument of death, and it is placed on His shoulders, for Him to carry to the place of execution, as a badge of infamy and to add to His torment.

¹ "And they took Jesus and led Him forth. And bearing His own Cross He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst." (St. John xix. 17, 18.)

The Cross, till then so infamous that whosoever touched it became legally unclean, has since become a badge of honour worn on the breasts of knights and on the crowns of kings, and is worshipped on every Christian altar. Let us behold our Lord with a rope round His neck, bending under His burden and staggering along up the ragged ascent, amidst peals of laughter, sneers, and rude shouts, and blasphemous imprecations of the rabble and the mob, headed and encouraged by Priests, Pharisees, and Scribes. How long, with such a spectacle staring us in the face, shall we continue to harbour our false notions? When, oh, when shall we learn practically this great truth of our religion, that to suffer derision, ill-usage, affronts, and injuries for the love of Jesus Christ is the most noble and most glorious of feats. We adore the Holy Cross because it was hallowed and consecrated by His touch. Why, then, shall we not receive willingly the ignominies of the same, as made glorious and honourable by His own example?

But besides the dishonour of carrying His Cross, He had to endure the fearful pain. It was made of two large, thick, and heavy beams, strong enough to carry His weight, and consequently was very heavy; and His poor Body was mangled and butchered, and His strength was exhausted through His loss of blood, want of sleep and food, and from His agonies of pain, especially from the crown of thorns. Yet He has to carry it, and to quicken His faltering steps they push Him and lash Him with stripes. Every step was like death to Him from the pains He felt all over His Body, and especially when the Cross struck against His Head, or jolted over the stones along the way. Thrice He fell, and then they kicked Him and pulled Him by the rope, or prodded Him with sticks, as if He were some senseless beast of burden: then, fearing lest He should

expire on the road, they eased Him of His burden, and forced another, a stranger from Cyrene, to carry it for Him. Oh, to what a fearful state has His love for us reduced Him!

In beholding our Lord thus groaning and oppressed under the weight of the Cross, I feel my unfortunate heart oppressed by another weight, I mean the weight of my ingratitude. How can we consent to let Him suffer alone, and not at once offer to share the Cross with Him? How can we for shame draw a line at our obligations, and meanly say thus far and no further? Shall we find it too much to bear a small penance which we deem hard or unjust, to be more punctual and exact in our daily observances and duties, to bear some slight or contempt or want of consideration, to suffer some pinch of poverty, to dwell in some particular place, to fulfil some lowly office? All these may be crosses, I admit, but what are they compared with the Cross of my Jesus? And if for our sakes He would carry His, what ingratitude and mean cowardice it is for us to shake off or try to shirk ours.

Point 3.—The Crucifixion.—At the bidding of His executioners, our humble Lord laid Himself down on His altar of sacrifice. From the first moment of His Life He had been looking forward to this, and His Heart had been yearning to perfect our redemption, and now, with the greatest affection, in all the fulness of His Heart, with perfect promptitude of will, He offers Himself as a ready Victim to His Father's infinite justice, and, quietly as a lamb, He submits to His brutal executioners, who nail Him by His hands and feet. Oh, what a mortal agony, what a deadly torture! Yet how many and much more poignant nails have we not driven through that Blessed Body? When they raised Him up and He is raised in the air, let us in silent horror look upon Him. To see the greatest work

of God's hands, His only Son, nailed to wood and hanging between two thieves on the top of that mountain! Nevertheless, even so the cruel Jews are not yet satisfied, but continue to curse Him, to scoff and jeer at Him, revelling at the sight of all His torments. Oh, this terrible world; oh, the fearful hardness of the heart of man when under the influence of unrestrained passions! And yet we can love this world, which is the same now as it was then! We can cringe before it, and sometimes we can actually seek after its notice and its esteem, and all the time delude ourselves as being followers of Jesus Christ! Such sentiments and conduct are as inexplicable as was the hardness of those who crucified our Blessed Lord.

Oh, let us pray with all our hearts that henceforth we may be crucified to the world and the world may be crucified to us, that we may love nothing now but Jesus, and Him crucified, that henceforth we may glory in nothing but in our Jesus, and Him crucified. O God—*fiat, fiat.*

End with three colloquies, and with such acts and affections as the Holy Ghost may suggest. "Our Father."

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord suffers for three hours on the Cross, His enemies all the while triumphing and insulting Him. He utters His seven last words, and then expires.

Prelude 2.—Let us place ourselves humbly beside the Cross.

¹ "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there; and the robbers, one on the right hand, the other on the left." (St. Luke xxiii. 33.)

Prelude 3.—Let us pray that living with our Lord a crucified life, with Him we may persevere to the end, and die on the Cross.

Point 1.—Let us survey our Lord as He hangs suffering. Truly He is by excellence the Man of Sorrows, for He suffers not one pain only, but a compound of most racking pains, and of most bitter, heart-breaking sorrows. His Head pierced with fixed sharp thorns, without anything on which to rest it, and without being able to move it unless with increased stings; His hands bored through and fastened, yet from the weight of His Body the holes are constantly widening; His feet, too, pinned to the wood—all the Body mangled by His cruel scourging, and emaciated by hunger and loss of blood. You might number His bones, as He hangs shivering in the cold air. Truly pain there is none like unto His, nor is there a sound place on which you could lay a finger. At this sight the saints have nerved themselves to such acts of penance as to become their own executioners. Let us at least have magnanimity enough to bear our crosses with patience, our repugnances to place or office, to Superiors or brethren, our uneasy and fretful temper, or bodily weakness, or want of talent, &c. Above all, let us not try to shake the Cross off or to shirk it. Let us not fly from our standard, but keep God our Lord company, and thereby this slight token of our love and gratitude may be a source of comfort to Him in His extremity.

Point 2.—*The ignominies endured on the Cross.*¹—It is a

¹ "And they that passed by, blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying: Vah, Thou that destroyest the Temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save Thyself, coming down from the Cross. In like manner also the Chief Priests mocking said with the Scribes: He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the Cross, that we may see and believe." (St. Mark xv. 29—32.)

great comfort when we are in distress to have one to say a kind word to us and to show us sympathy. But there was none to do this to our Lord: the only sounds He heard were scoffs and ribaldry, and this from a vast multitude of all classes, and gathered from all parts of the world, all blinded with passion, and looking upon Him as a seducer, a thief, a revolutionary agitator and sacrilegious blasphemer, for He said He was the Son of God, and also King of the Jews; and often loud shouts of joy were raised as they saw the progress of death in Him. Let us learn a lesson of meekness and patience from our humble Lord and Master. Let us reflect what kind of contempt and humiliations we dread most, and then casting an eye on our Love thus vilified and despised, we will compare the injuries and affronts we suffer with those which He endured through love for us, and thus will nerve ourselves to bear them with joy. We believe that this Son of God, most deserving of all honour, for our sakes, and without the slightest obligation on His side, and, without expecting or deriving any advantage from us, became the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. Is it not, then, blindness and madness for us vile creatures, whose origin is from nothing, whose end is corruption and a handful of dust, whose merit is hell-fire for our manifold sins, and consequently who deserve universal contempt and abuse, is it not folly that we should resent any injury, rebuke, humiliation? Let us take this truth to heart, and bring it home to ourselves, and it must produce in us the same effects as it has produced on all the saints who have gone before us, and will cause us too to rejoice in the midst of most cutting humiliations.

*Point 3.—The heroic acts of virtue practised on the Cross.*¹—

¹ "And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And the people stood beholding, and the rulers with them derided Him, saying: He saved others, let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the

The first was an heroic act of *charity* towards those who crucified Him. With a special prayer He begged His Heavenly Father to forgive them, alleging their ignorance as an excuse. Amid such tortures He forgets Himself in His interest for those who were ridiculing and blaspheming Him and actually draining His life from Him. What followed plainly showed with what a tender and loving Heart He made this prayer; for no sooner did He hear one of those crucified with Him, who at first had blasphemed Him, now invoke Him, saying, "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom," than with infinite mercy He granted him full remission of all his sins, and solemnly declared to him, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

After this let no one, no matter how grievous and many are his sins, lose confidence in our dear Lord. Yes! it is most certain, though our poor souls are as burdened with guilt as were those of His executioners, that if with humble and contrite hearts we have

Elect of God. . . . And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. . . . And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." (St. Luke xxiii. 34--43.) "Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. . . . And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth. Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated." (St. John xix. 25--30.) "And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46.) "And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, and saying this, He gave up the ghost." (St. Luke xxiii. 46.)

recourse to Him and implore His mercy, through the merits of His Passion and Death, we also shall obtain forgiveness. Why then shall we despond, having to deal with so benign and merciful a Lord?

The second was an act of gratitude towards His Blessed Mother and St. John. These two had accompanied Him in His lifetime and in the course of His Passion, and were then standing at the foot of His Cross. In testimony of His love, He gave to His Blessed Mother St. John for a son, and to him our Blessed Lady to be a Mother; but, if we are to believe the teaching of many of the saints, in St. John He regarded and addressed each and all of us, and constituted His Blessed Mother the real Mother of all the faithful, whom He consigned to her love and to her special care. Hence, in regard of her sorrows at the foot of the Cross, the Church styles her the Mother of Mercy and the most loving Mother of all the adopted brothers of Jesus Christ; and consequently we are all her true children. Oh! let our hearts burst with feelings of intense love and gratitude, and let us offer ourselves with all our hearts up to her, and make her the sole mistress and absolute disposer of ourselves and everything belonging to us; and being thus made members of the same family with Jesus, having the same Father and Mother as He, do let us have the family features and character, love of and courage under the Cross.

Next our Lord addressed His Eternal Father. Having suspended the effects which otherwise would have redounded to His inferior nature from the Beatific Vision, that He might suffer the agonies of interior desolation, He exclaimed, "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" Not that He laments or complains, but in wonder and submission to the will of God He makes an heroic act of resignation to His

Father, who permitted His Most Holy Son to feel this bitter anguish and desolation, that thereby He might merit for us due comfort and relief at the hour of our death.

Finally, from the loss of blood, which was well-nigh drained away from His Body, and from the burning fever of His Wounds, He suffered a fresh agony of thirst; and this He would make known, not only to fulfil the prophecy, but also to have an occasion of enduring fresh scoffs and torments. The wretches thereupon steeped a sponge in gall and vinegar and put it to His parched lips. After which our dear Lord, protesting His perfect accomplishment of the will of His Father, breathed out His heroic Soul, and bowed His Head, and all was over. He died for our sakes.

Oh, that we too could die of grief and sorrow! Let us place on one side all that He has done and suffered for love of us, and on the other all our ingratitude and iniquities, and let us say from the depths of our hearts: O good God, if after having meditated on your bitter Passion and Death we are to continue cold and ungrateful, we earnestly beg of you to let us die on the spot; for to live any longer such a tepid, indevout, and unworthy life would serve only to sustain alive a monster of ingratitude.

“Our Father.”

JESUS DEAD UPON THE CROSS.¹

NOTE.—This has been a favourite subject of contemplation to the saints in every age. It has supported the martyrs amid their cruel tortures; it has encouraged confessors in the sacrifices, labours, trials, and persecutions to which their zeal prompted or exposed them; it has enabled virgins to bear the hardships of a life devoted to solitude, penance, and prayer; it has beguiled the long lonely hours of the solitaries of the desert; it was the "Master" of St. Thomas Aquinas; it was the "one book" of St. Francis; it was the glory of St. Paul; it was the "magnificent spectacle" of the sympathetic soul of St. Augustine.

Prelude 1.—Let us in spirit take our stand by our dead Lord on the Cross.

Prelude 2.—Let us earnestly beg of Him whose dead Body is united with the Divinity to enlighten us on the many lessons which the Cross should teach us, that we may have a practical love of it in life and in death.

Point 1.—*Let us contemplate Jesus as our Victim.*—It is here that we see the terrible malice of sin. For by it we, who are under infinite obligations to God for all His benefits bestowed upon us in the natural order, both as to body and soul, and for the countless graces in the supernatural order, which are far more numerous and more excellent than all the gifts of nature, are guilty of a crime against His infinite majesty, justice, and sanctity. It therefore is a crime of infinite malice if we consider it ethically. Hence it follows that to propitiate the anger of God, or to satisfy the demands

¹ "And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, gave up the ghost." (St. Matt. xxvii. 50.)

of His justice, an Infinite Victim was necessary, one whose dignity would be proportionate to the malice of the crime. Not all mankind together could suffice to pay the debt incurred by one single sin: for, after all, no combination of finite victims could produce an infinite atonement, such as the offended majesty and justice of God demanded. It was for this reason that the Eternal Son of God assumed our human nature, and in that nature would bear our iniquities, and by His Passion and Death would repair the outrages of which we were guilty. He became the sin-offering for all mankind and for each individual of the human race. It was for each that this ruin of His most perfect and beautiful Body was effected, and that His Soul was drowned in an ocean of sorrow.

O my Jesus! for my sins Thy hands and feet were pierced with nails; Thy sacred Head was crowned with thorns; Thy eyes were blinded by the blood which oozed from the wounds in Thy Head and face; and Thy whole Body was one vast wound, through which Thy wearied and agonized Soul took its last flight back to the God who gave it! Who can conceive the dreadful nature of sin, which demanded such a fearful atonement? Who will not tremble when he beholds this proof of the justice of God? "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" If the blows of God's vengeance have been so many and so heavy on His well-beloved Son, who was full of all grace, all life, all beauty, what will He do to those who by sin have forfeited all three? If justice tempered by mercy is so terrible, what will be that same justice when the hour of His mercy is past? "Holy and terrible is His Name: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."¹ Let us pray with the Psalmist, "Pierce my flesh with Thy fear, for I am

¹ Psalm cx. 9.

afraid of Thy judgments.”¹ Let us in holy fear and confidence fly for protection and refuge to His opened side: “Within Thy sacred wounds hide me, O Lord.”

Point 2.—The Cross teaches us the price of our souls.—
“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.”² So writes St. Peter; and St. Paul, “Ye are bought with a great price.”³ Not all the treasures of the universe could purchase a single soul; nor could the combined efforts and sacrifices of men and angels succeed in saving one human soul. For this an infinite price had to be paid, which could only be done by one who was Himself infinite. Therefore did the Son of God come down from Heaven, full of grace and truth, and assume our human nature, imparting to it an infinite price and dignity. “The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us,” and was made in all things like to us, except that He had no sin. “He was beautiful beyond the rest of the children of men,” “beauty was poured over His lips,” “His feet were beautiful as He proceeded on His way preaching the Gospel of peace, bringing glad tidings of good things:” His mind was sublime and beautiful in the possession of all truth, and His Heart was beautiful, in which the noblest of passions, like the strings of a lyre, were divinely attuned in perfect harmony; “His ways were beautiful, and all His paths were peace, mercy, and truth.” And now let us contemplate Him as His lifeless Body hangs upon the Cross. What has become of all this beauty? “We have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him. Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: His look as it were hidden and despised:

¹ Psalm cxviii. 120.

² 1 St. Peter i. 18.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 20.

and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted." He has become a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. This is the price, this the sacrifice of Jesus in order to pay the ransom for our souls, for each individual soul. Well may the Spirit of God counsel us, "My son, have a care of thy soul and give it honour according to its desert."¹ Alas, how little care have we had of our poor souls! How recklessly we have exposed them to ruin! How often have we bartered them for gold, for a fleeting, shameful pleasure, or for some empty gratification. O my Jesus! is it thus I show my gratitude for all Thou hast done for me? Is it thus that I recognize the value of my soul, or appreciate the price which Thou hast paid for my redemption? Grant, dear Lord, that I may learn at last the real value of my poor soul—grant that I may by union with Thee on the Cross fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for the salvation of my soul.

Point 3.—The Cross teaches me to love.—The heavens and the earth, and in fact the whole universe, proclaim the goodness and generosity of God, and thereby challenge my love of Him for all these proofs of His love for me. But how feebly do they tell me of His love when compared with the voice which comes to me from the dead Body of Jesus on the Cross. If the criterion of love is suffering, and if the measure of love is estimated by the amount of that suffering, then what must have been the reality and intensity of the love of Jesus for me. "He loved me, and delivered Himself for me."² He assumed human nature and concealed His Divine attributes under the form and habit of a servant for me—He lived an obscure, laborious, and poverty-stricken life for me; He would be persecuted

¹ Ecclus. x. 31.

² Galat. ii. 20.

and tormented through love for me; finally, He expired in an agony of love for me! O Blessed Jesus! even that did not satisfy His loving Heart, but He must needs continue this His sacrifice, "having loved His own He will love them unto the end," and extend it through the whole world, "for from the rising of the sun unto its going down, My Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered up a clean oblation."¹ Truly our Jesus is all love for us on the Cross; "He is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands,"² white as the spotless lily in His most pure Soul, white with the pallor of death in His Body, from which the last drops of blood have been taken; but yet He is all ruddy like one that has trodden the wine-press alone, besmeared all over "with His most Precious Blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel," proclaiming to us how much He has loved us. Love demands a return of love; then we are bound to love our crucified Jesus. Alas, we can love any one else but Him! we can make sacrifice, can labour and suffer pain for others; but what labour, what sacrifice have we made through our love for our Love who is crucified? Shame upon us that we can look upon our crucified Lover, "the firstborn from the dead," and yet hesitate to embrace His badge of love. Oh, for the spirit of him who would glory in nothing but in his Jesus crucified; who could think of nothing, love nothing, but in Christ and Him crucified! Oh, for the feelings of him who long yearned for, and ardently loved, the cross upon which at length he breathed his last in testimony of his love of his Jesus crucified. Let us pour out our souls in ardent prayers to our Blessed Lord on His Cross, that with Him we too may be fastened on the Cross: by the annihilation of all self-love, by sacrificing all worldly pleasures or

¹ Malach. i. 11.² Cant. v. 10.

enjoyments, by death to our own wills and judgments, by detachment from all the passing things of earth, and attachment to Jesus crucified.

End with triple colloquy: to our Blessed Lady, the Mother of Jesus crucified; to our Lord Himself; and to the Eternal Father. End with "Our Father."

REPETITION OF THE WHOLE PASSION.

NOTE.—St. Ignatius observes, that if we wish to prolong the time in this third part of the Exercises, it can be done by taking in each contemplation fewer mysteries: for example, in the first contemplation only to consider the Last Supper; in the next, the Washing of Feet; in the third, the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and so on. If, on the other hand, we wish to shorten the time, it may be done by the omission of all repetitions, and including in each contemplation a separate station of the Passion.

However, in either case, he recommends that on the last day of the Exercises in this part, we should make a general review of the whole of the Passion of our Lord, by way of repetition.

This may be done under the following heads or points, in which we consider the interior sufferings of our Lord, the sufferings He endured in His reputation, and lastly, what He endured in His Sacred Body.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—We will recall to mind how our Lord retired to the Garden, prayed there, and in His Agony sweated Blood. Then He confronted His enemies, who dragged Him to the house of Annas, thence to Caiphas; from there they led Him to Pilate, and from thence to

Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, where He was scourged and crowned with thorns, and with Barabbas was put to the vote. He is given up to the Jews, laden with His Cross, and finally, was nailed to it. Whilst He was dying, He utters His seven last words; He dies, and His side was pierced through with a lance.

Prelude 2.—Imagine the City of Jerusalem—the court of the High Priest, the fort and courtyard of Antonia, the palace of Herod, and the streets from one to the other; also the way to the Mount of Olives to the east, and the road from Antonia to Golgotha on the west of the city.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg the grace to grieve intensely with our sorrowing Lord, and interior anguish at the sufferings which He undergoes for our sins.

Point 1.—*His interior sufferings.*—First, He begins His Passion in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He fulfils to the letter the promise which He made to us in the contemplation of His Kingdom, not to ask of us any sacrifice which He had not Himself first offered. He has willed that His followers should work more numerous and more brilliant miracles than Himself, but He never willed that in the career of torments and sacrifices they should ever come up to Him. Let us see Him, the valiant and all-powerful, stricken with fear and terror, not only at the sight of all the pains and torments which were drawn out clearly before His mind's eye, but also at the consciousness of guilt, of all the horrors perpetrated, or to be perpetrated, by the sinful slaves of human passions. If the doubt whether we have been guilty of a mortal sin racks us with terror, we who have such a faint knowledge of sin, and whose consciences are so blunted, what must have been the terror of the Heart of Jesus?

To this is added loathing and *disgust* at the know-

ledge which He has, that the return which even those whom He has favoured most will frequently make for all the benefits of His Passion will be but cold ingratitude; and to a noble and generous soul there is no wound that cuts deeper than ingratitude.

In addition to this fear and disgust is added an overwhelming sadness, such as we can never conceive, nay, such as would have stopped His Heart's action had not His Divinity intervened. Whatever way He looked, He found Himself friendless and a solitary, no sympathy either in Heaven or on earth, and at the same time the uselessness of His blood-letting for some; and for many, through their own fault, its being a cause of deeper damnation. And this sadness was not to leave Him for an instant, until it should culminate and find expression just before His Death in the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" On the one hand, the intensity of His natural feelings, and, on the other, His resignation to the Divine will, produced such a struggle within Him as to produce a bloody sweat. Oh! let us beg the grace to fathom the abyss of grief which floods His Soul, and that other far deeper abyss of love. Love and grief—grief and love; such is the Heart of Jesus. Passing over the other scenes in which these feelings more particularly were aroused, let us pause more especially at the scene when Jesus addressed His Mother from the Cross. Ordinarily, out of a feeling of common humanity, and out of consideration for the feelings of both, when a son is executed, his mother is not permitted to be present, as their love would only add to the anguish of the one and the other; but Jesus sees His Mother, whose heart is pierced with agony, standing at the foot of His Cross, with His beloved disciple, St. John. He alone could fathom the all but infinite depth of the sea of sorrow which overwhelmed her soul, and this increased

immeasurably His own desolation. He is about to leave her whom He loved more than the whole world, and when He was gone she would be alone! He had given up all else, even His own Body and Blood to be henceforth our nourishment, but He clung to the last to this one treasure; and now it is time to rob Himself of this. Turning then to her, He said: "Woman, thou woman of all women the most excellent, model and example to all women till the end of time, behold thy son, my dearest and most beloved Apostle, adopt him in My stead;" and to the disciple He said: "Behold thy Mother, love her, cherish her, honour and praise her in My place." In that moment the last design of Jesus is fulfilled, and the family tie is perfected and sealed with His own Precious Blood, and thenceforth we have all got a Mother; and that Mother accepts all the faithful as her own children, and transfers to them, and to each of them, a mother's love and care. And at length, when it was close on three o'clock, Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" It is not complainingly, nor from discontent, nor because of the excess of His pains. No! it is because of His anguish at seeing Himself abandoned and rejected by such a mass of mankind, who would turn all His sufferings to their greater and more terrible condemnation. It was the cry of a suppliant from the last depths of His Soul to His Father not to abandon Him in the persons of His members, who by their obstinate malice would precipitate themselves into Hell. Let us think and ponder deeply what it is to be abandoned by God. It is this thought that weighs heavily on the Heart of our Lord, and yet, alas! we think so little of it, fulfilling that of Proverbs:¹ "The wicked when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth." Let us consider how our

¹ Prov. xviii. 3.

dear Lord behaves in His interior trials. During His dreadful aridity, desolation, and anguish, He perseveres in His prayer, and the greater His anguish the longer He prays, and it is always that His Father's will may be done. As regards others He preserves the same thoughtfulness, the same charity and sweetness, as though He were suffering nothing Himself. He does not allow His own sorrows and pains, no matter how violent, to influence Him in His relations with others, unless to make Him more gentle, considerate, and, if possible, more ready to prove His love to them.

Point 2.—He suffered in His *reputation*. This is a kind of suffering for which every follower of our dear Lord must be prepared ; and here, as in everything else, He goes ahead of us, and, as the Prophet foretold, “was filled with reproaches.”¹ Bearing in mind His high sense of honour, and at the same time the importance for Him of a good reputation, let us consider the manner in which His honour was impugned. They seize and bind Him as if He were a violent robber and an assassin. They flout Him on the face amid the applause of His judges. They scoff at His utterances of wisdom. They accept the testimony of perjurers and calumniators, and pronounce Him a blasphemer and guilty of sacrilege. He is held up to mockery and pity as a fool, is put on a par with Barabbas. And all this not by one class, but by all, and not only before the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but before Jews gathered together from every part of the Roman world, from Persia and Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome. Then let us consider how He endures all this. By a word He could have prevented all this, yet He willingly endures all with *humility* ; looking upon Himself as the sin-offering of the world and of our individual world ; for our individual sins deserved all

¹ Lament. iii. 30.

this. "He loved me and delivered Himself for me."¹ He endures all in *silence*. What an example for us! for it is of all things the most difficult to abandon our cause to the hands of God under the most galling affronts and calumnies. Lastly, He bears all with *love*. He loves His Father and submits to His holy will. He loves us and wishes to atone for our sins. Then I must prepare to suffer like Him, and be ready to be a victim of *contempt*: by our sins we have been guilty of contempt of God, wherefore it is but just that His creatures should despise us. And, moreover, if we do not deserve the contempt accruing from a calumny, do we not deserve it for a thousand other faults, which remain concealed? Let us insist with ourselves on this point. Often a mere word or look which does not betray contempt, but only some inattention or slight disrespect, wounds our sensitiveness and makes us unhappy, and yet we are pledged in every way to follow our Blessed Lord. We often *talk* of love of contempt and injuries, but alas! how many amongst us bow down and worship at the altar of men's esteem! This is well known to others about us, and hence they have to take such pains not to wound our delicacy and susceptibility. Alas! let us cease to deceive ourselves and to regard the third degree of humility, or what St. Ignatius requires in the Eleventh Rule of the Summary of his Constitutions, as something to admire, but by no means to be reduced to practice, and let us earnestly desire and pray that we may attain at length this stamp of sanctity.

Point 3.—What Jesus Christ suffered in His Body.—Here we may recall what He endured in the fearful scourging at the pillar: also the agonies of His being crowned with thorns and of their remaining in the festering wounds until He expired, and lastly, on His

¹ Galat. ii. 20.

being nailed to the Cross and His agony thereon for three long hours.

Let us consider with what heroic *patience* He suffered, never giving the least sign of the pains which tormented His most delicate and sensitive Flesh. Again, *inwardly* He accepts all in a spirit of profound *humility*, as the Victim for our sins, and above all in a spirit of *loving mercy*.

Let us ask ourselves now, Is it not *just* that every Christian, much more *we*, should also practise mortification? And this, firstly, by crucifying our disordered love of comfort and of pleasure, remembering that "under a head crowned with thorns it is shameful to live delicately;" and, secondly, by inflicting on ourselves some voluntary sufferings for love of Jesus and in company with Him. Though they may be slight and in themselves contemptible, yet if performed regularly and in the proper dispositions, they have great efficacy in obtaining graces from God, in satisfying the Divine justice for our sins, and in preserving us from fresh falls. Let us resign ourselves into the hands of God for everything which may make our bodies suffer, whether by accident or otherwise, and especially when the last hour shall come.

End with "Our Father."

THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD.¹

Prelude 1.—Let us recall to mind how, after our Lord was dead, Joseph and Nicodemus took down His Sacred Body from the Cross in the presence of His sorrowful Mother, and, after anointing it, deposited it in the sepulchre.

Prelude 2.—Let us humbly place ourselves in spirit beside them.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly the grace to know our dear Lord who is dead through love for us, that in life and in death we may love Him in return, and be ever faithful in following Him.

Point 1.—Let us contemplate the Sacred Body of our Blessed Lord. His hands and feet are marked with the holes made by the cruel nails, His sacred forehead is punctured by the crown of thorns, His whole Body is disfigured by the countless strokes of the scourging, and His blessed side is ripped open, laying bare His Sacred Heart. We look in vain for a sound place in Him. How literally are all the prophecies fulfilled in His regard. Truly they have dug His hands and feet, they have numbered all His bones. There is no beauty nor comeliness in Him.² And yet if we look

¹ "And when evening was come, Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the Body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that He should be already dead. And sending for the Centurion, he asked him if He were already dead. And when he had understood it by the Centurion, he gave the Body to Joseph. And Joseph, buying fine linen, and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen, and laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock." (St. Mark xv. 42—46.)

² "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness; and we have seen Him, and there was so sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him. Despised and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; His look as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not." (Isaias liii. 2, 3.)

at Him with the eyes of faith, we see His beauty more radiant than ever. He was beautiful as He lay in the manger as a babe, beautiful as He sat in the midst of the doctors hearing them and asking them questions; His hands were beautiful, ever open and scattering blessings, His feet were beautiful as He went about doing good, evangelizing peace, evangelizing good things; His mouth and tongue were beautiful, and "grace was poured abroad in His lips,"¹ and His speech was so eloquent that in listening to Him men forgot the very necessities of life; but though the hands were stiff in death, and His eyes were blind to the light, and He is incapable of utterance or of motion, yet He was never so beautiful as He is now. His wounds are so many gems setting off His beautiful courage and glorious devotedness and love. They every one are like open mouths, telling me, *Ecce quomodo amavi te*, how much He has loved me. He lies like a warrior after a hard won victory taking His rest, but only for a short while. His labours are over, but His glory is about to begin and shall never know an ending. And through the opening in His blessed side, let us gaze on the blood and water which trickles from the wound made by the soldier's spear. Oh, the poor Heart of our dear Jesus! That Heart that was weighed down by sorrow, that palpitated with fright, was sickened with loathing, but was always brave and undaunted, because inflamed with love for each of us. Oh, the big and generous Heart of Jesus! vast as the sands which are on the sea-shore. At last it has ceased to beat, and is grown cold; but again it is only for a short time. Its life and action will soon return, and we shall each be able to make its love our own.

O dear Lord, fill us with admiration of Thy beauty

¹ "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad in Thy lips; therefore hath God blessed Thee for ever." (Psalm xlv. 3.)

in death, let us know nothing but Thee, and Thee crucified!¹ let us henceforth glory but in Thee, and Thee crucified. Again, let us learn how to estimate the world and its judgments. How cruel and heartless it was to Thee! with what disdain it treated Thee, and with what black ingratitude. How false and perverted its judgments of Thee! And, alas! though ages have passed, its estimations and judgments still remain. Grant us then the grace to die with Thee to the world, that we may live to Thee, to be crucified to the world, and to become men to whom the world is crucified.

Point 2.—Let us contemplate the wound in His Sacred Heart. The spear opened the blessed Heart of Jesus without inflicting pain, for it was beyond its reach; but it was not so with that of our Blessed Lady, in whom the words of holy Simeon were verified, "And thy own soul a sword (of sorrow) shall pierce."

"And there came forth blood and water." Here is the consummation of love on the part of our dear Lord. The virtue and efficacy of that blood and water are applied to His mystical spouse the Church, and to each of us her children, being the symbols of the Blessed Sacrament and of holy Baptism.² Well does St. John say the side is "opened," to teach us that this door of true life, from which come forth the life-giving sacraments of the Church, is always wide open. This Sacred Heart is the never-failing fountain of grace, in which I shall find all the treasures of Divine wisdom and knowledge, of piety and innocence, of humility and meekness, of goodness and mercy; this blessed Heart

¹ "For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

² "Ex costa Adæ Heva ædificata est; ex corde autem Jesu, in Spiritu Sancto concepta et nata Ecclesia . . . et de suo latere Christus aquam nobis dedit et sanguinem unde repararetur Ecclesia." (Chrysostom, in Ephes. v.)

is a very ocean of mercy. Jesus Himself has said it: "If sinners will come to My Heart, they shall find it an ocean of mercy." Peter and Thomas and Magdalene found it so. Then courage, my soul! I too shall find it so. The Heart of Jesus is a sure refuge in every danger, wherein I can dwell securely, protected from the fiercest storms of temptation. The Heart of Jesus is the school of true sanctity, in which the bitterness of trials and the practice of virtue is sweetened; it is the paradise of our souls. Oh, how good and pleasant it is to dwell in the Sacred Heart! in this temple of peace and love—this holy of holies—this ark of the New Testament. Let us resolve to take up our abode in it, for surely we shall there find all good things, and shall be protected from all those evils which the enemy of our human nature, the false and treacherous world, and our inconstant and depraved nature, are always plotting against us.

*Point 3.—The Burial.*¹—With what reverence and love Joseph and Nicodemus carry the Body of our Lord to the sepulchre, followed by His sorrowing Mother, and by His Beloved Disciple and Mary Magdalene, shedding bitter tears, the one of love, the other of penance. What a contrast with the last obsequies of the great ones of the world. The remains of the King of kings, the great Liberator of mankind, the Head of the elect, are accompanied to the grave by three men and a handful of pious women, while the children of this world are borne to their last resting-place by crowds of friends and admirers, with all the signs of pomp and pageantry.

¹ "They took therefore the Body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, where no man had yet been laid. There therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand." (St. John xix. 40—42.)

Eja mater fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris, fac ut tecum lugeam. They place Him in a new sepulchre, in which no one had been buried. Alas! how rarely can it be said of us when we receive His Sacred Body, that we place Him in our hearts, in which nothing else has been laid. If through the loving providence and infinite mercy of God they are free from all mortal and venial sins, yet are there not some faults, offences, abuses of grace, or some inordinate affections still lingering in our hearts, which render them a less worthy place for Him to dwell in? Let us resolve henceforth to clear out of them everything which may be less pleasing to Him, and to love nothing but in Him, for Him, and with Him. Let us determine to die to the world that we may live more perfectly to Him who is our true life.

End with "Our Father."

THE RULES OF TEMPERANCE.

1. St. Ignatius in the third part of the Exercises gives us a document of eight rules for the regulation of our conduct in regard of our food, which are called the Rules of Temperance.

2. Although the Saint places them at the end of the third part of the Exercises, it does not therefore follow that they may not be given to an exercitant even at the commencement; nay, there are reasons at times for doing so; first, because the observance of these rules may be necessary for the fulfilment of the duty of prayer; or, secondly, because during the time of retreat a person is better able to determine the amount of nourishment which he requires, and to regulate and accustom himself to it for the future; and, thirdly, because if for any reason the exercitant cannot perform

any other corporal penance, he may by the observance of these rules, obtain corresponding merit by the practice of self-denial and self-conquest which they involve.

3. For the better understanding of these rules we must observe that there are two sources of temptation, one in *ourselves* which is our natural appetite and inclination, the other *exterior* to us and arising from the devil. He, as the enemy of human nature, studies this natural inclination, and turns it to account for the increase of his temptations. We must then with great care distinguish in ourselves our reason and will which is the superior part, and the inferior part in which are found our appetites and imagination, which evoke in us endless phantoms. The only way of repressing these capricious and wayward inclinations is to resist following at once their impressions, and thus always to be master of ourselves.

4. Again, to avert the hurtful effects of our appetites and imagination, we must acquire a habit of foreseeing the occasions in which they may be called into activity, and of determining our line of conduct accordingly; and afterwards examine ourselves how far we have been faithful to our previous determinations. This is best secured by exact observance of the Particular Examen.

These principles are embodied and illustrated in the rules regarding our food, but, as we see, are applicable to any other natural inclination.

Rule 1.—We need less care of temperance in regard of bread, as it furnishes less temptation to excess than other kinds of food.

Rule 2.—As regards drink we ought to be more abstemious than with regard to bread, and should consider well what may be good, and cut off whatever may be detrimental to us.

Rule 3.—As to delicate and made dishes, we should observe greater and more complete abstinence, as in these our inclination is more liable to be inordinate and we are more tempted to indulgence.

Rule 4.—Having due regard to our health, the more we abstain from what is *amply* sufficient nourishment, the sooner shall we acquire the right medium in food and drink, and this for two reasons: firstly, because in thus rightly guiding and disposing ourselves, we shall often experience interior sentiments and Divine inspirations whereby the proper medium will be made clear to us; and secondly, because if in abstaining and retrenching we see that either our strength or disposition for the Exercises begin to fail us, we shall come to judge more easily and safely what support we require.

Rule 5.—During meals let us consider how our Lord would eat and drink, speak and comport Himself, and strive to imitate Him, thereby keeping our mind occupied more in this and less on the nourishment of our body; and thereby we shall acquire proper manners and due self-restraint and control.

Rule 6.—We shall take less pleasure and concern in our food, if during meals we occupy our minds with the lives of the saints or some other pious reflections, or spiritual work which we are to undertake, thereby keeping the mind employed and the heart pre-occupied.

Rule 7.—Above all things let us avoid concentrating our attention on what we are eating, and also greediness, and retain mastery of ourselves both as to manner of eating and quantity of food.

Rule 8.—To cut off all excess, it is of great advantage to determine beforehand, when we are not hungry or after a meal, what and how much we will take at our next refection, and not on any account to exceed it when the time comes, no matter what may be our appetite

or the strength of the temptation to do so; on the contrary, if we make any change, let it be to diminish the quantity, and thus conquer the appetite and defeat the temptation of the devil.

It is easy to see how these rules may be applied also to other *natural* inclinations, such as irritability, pride, vanity, uncharitableness, sensuality, and the like.

From these rules, we see how admirably and simply St. Ignatius leads us on to the habit of self-conquest in even the most ordinary actions of life, and teaches us to supernaturalize the most natural duties.

THREE METHODS OF PRAYER.

One of the most profitable instructions given us by St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises is that of "Three Methods of Prayer," as it is explained in the *Directorium*.¹

That he attached much importance to them is clear from his requiring those who give retreats always to teach and explain them to exercitants.² Again, we read how St. Francis Xavier not only made use of them himself, but recommended them to his penitents, and sometimes enjoined them as a penance, to the great advantage of their souls.

There is no doubt that if we practise them we shall find them exceedingly useful, and a great aid to contemplation and to recollection.

FIRST METHOD.

The *first* method of prayer has for its subject-matter the Ten Commandments, the seven capital sins, the

¹ C. xxxvii.

² *Instit.* p. vii. c. 4.

three powers of the soul, the five senses of the body, or any rules or any virtues peculiar to our state; and is wonderfully beneficial in aiding us to acquire a knowledge of ourselves, and to discover our faults, failings, and negligences.

The *manner* of performing it is as follows:

1. In the first place, before commencing, we must recollect ourselves and place ourselves in the presence of God, and reflect on the serious duty we are going to perform and on the object we have in view. This is common to every form of prayer, and is impressed upon us by the Spirit of God: "Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as one that tempteth God."¹

2. We must make our preparatory prayer, in which we beg humbly of God our Lord that He will grant us grace to know what faults or failings we have been guilty of in that which is the special subject-matter on which we intend to examine ourselves, and also that He will further give us His grace and assistance to amend them in the future, for the greater glory and praise of His Divine Majesty and for the greater purification of our souls.

3. We then examine ourselves on the particular commandment, and see how we have observed it or in what we have failed in regard of it, for the space of two or three minutes: we then make an act of sorrow for the faults we discover, humbly ask pardon of God, and say the "Our Father," and we follow the same method in each of the commandments.

If, however, by God's grace we find that we have nothing to accuse ourselves of in any commandment, we give thanks to God for having preserved us from falling, and pass on to another. For those who by God's mercy are aiming at perfection and consequently

¹ Ecclus. xviii. 23.

avoid grievous violation of the law of God, they may examine themselves on the faults and negligences in the observance of those virtues which are enjoined in the Decalogue; as, for example, on faith, hope, and charity, on prayer and the qualities which are required to render it acceptable, such as humility, confidence, fidelity, and perseverance, and the like. We have to observe a similar method in the use of the faculties of our soul, or the use and abuse of our senses, or in the fulfilment of the particular duties of our state of life.

It is well, also, to introduce other considerations in this method of prayer and self-examination, such as, for example, how profitable, reasonable, and necessary it is to observe, how prejudicial and unreasonable to transgress, this command of God.

If the exercise be on the "Three Powers of the Soul,"¹

¹ St. Ignatius observes: "With regard to the Three Powers of the Soul, let the same method or rule be observed as in the Commandments, making the Addition, preparatory prayer, and colloquy."

The first of these powers of the soul is the Memory, which owing to our corrupt nature is prone to recall and dwell upon those things which flatter the senses or our own self-love, and which too often are liable to be dangerous or sinful. Sometimes these memories spring from our own will or from habit, at other times they may be suggested by the good spirit or from the devil, as we have already seen.

We may sin by the Memory by provoking or encouraging thoughts of sensuality or impurity, of uncharitableness, of disobedience, &c.: by occupying ourselves in recalling vain, worldly, or dangerous memories: by entertaining profane and distracting thoughts, which come into the mind when we are at prayer, in church, &c. On the other hand, we gain merit in the right use of the memory by rejecting all memories which may incline us to sin; by repelling imaginations or recollections of profane things, especially in time of prayer; by cutting off all idle fancies and unprofitable remembrances; lastly, by habitually remembering or recalling the presence of God, or of holy things.

As regards the second power, namely, the Intellect. We sin if through our own fault we remain in ignorance of those things which are necessary for salvation, or of the obligations of our state or position: or if we form rash judgments of others; or if we are fickle and inconstant in our judgment, or lightly abandon good resolutions which we have made: or if we are obstinate in our opinions. We also fail in the right use of this faculty,

or on the "Senses,"¹ we may reflect on the great favour God has done for us in giving us such a power or sense, for what end He has conferred it on us, how our

by dissimulation, political mode of action, scheming, craft, curiously searching into matters which we neither ought nor can thoroughly understand, such as mysteries which are the object of faith; or by defending our views with vehemence, often with self-sufficiency and contempt for the opinion of others, whereas a man of good judgment rarely has much confidence in himself. The one and only remedy against all these sins or faults is the true knowledge and due appreciation of our worthlessness.

With regard to the faculty of the Will, it may be said to consist of two parts: one superior, which in all things is conformable to, and in harmony with the Divine will; the other or inferior inclines us to those things which are unworthy of us, and which we must resist; which would prompt us to gratify "the law in our members which fights against the law of our minds, and would enslave us to the law of sin," and from which all sin proceeds.

¹ With regard to the five senses of the body, St. Ignatius says: "The same order is to be observed, the subject-matter only being changed." In the exposition of the "Foundation" of the Spiritual Exercises, we saw that all sin springs from the wrong use of creatures, through the medium of the senses. From this we see the vital importance of keeping these under due control; and hence the value of Rules of Modesty, such as are laid down by St. Ignatius, as well as by all the other founders of Religious Orders.

1. The *Eyes*, the sense through which death commonly enters (Jerem. ix. 21), as we see in Eve, David, &c. Let us beware of fixing our eyes on any dangerous object. From neglect in this respect we expose ourselves to countless phantasms, imaginations, and perturbations. Let us also avoid letting our eyes wander thoughtlessly at random; and particularly let us beware of indiscriminate reading.

2. *Ears*.—How much ruin has sprung from listening to loose, uncharitable, or idle conversation. "Be not led astray," says St. Paul, "evil conversation corrupteth good manners." (1 Cor. xviii. 33.) It is an axiom, "Tell me with whom you entertain yourself, and I will tell you who you are." Follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit, and "hedge in your ears with thorns."

3. *Smell*.—All faults of this sense arise from voluptuousness and effeminacy, which are an abomination. That indulgence of this sense may amount to grievous sin is clear from the punishment which God inflicts upon it. (Isaiah xxxiv. 3.)

4. *Tongue*.—St. James (Epist. iii.) tells us that he that offends not in word is a peaceful man. It is indeed a tiny member, but yet it is a fire, a world of iniquity; the tongue no man can tame—it is an unquiet evil—full of deadly poison—from it proceed blessings and cursings. The faults that proceed from it are without number: falsehood, detraction, calumny,

Blessed Lord and the saints used it; then examine what use we have made of it, make our act of sorrow, and say the "Our Father" as above, and resolve to employ it better in future. It is incredible how much this method of prayer conduces to reform our life and restore fervour; for it is too true that very many daily faults are committed in the use of our faculties and senses of which we are ignorant through want of reflection.

At the end of the exercise we make our colloquy according to the subject-matter, and end with "Our Father."

Of course this method of prayer should not be made without the approbation of the confessor, by any who are of a nervous and scrupulous disposition, or who are troubled by temptations of mistrust and want of confidence in the mercy of God.

SECOND METHOD.

After recollecting ourselves and putting ourselves in the presence of God, and considering the exercise upon which we are about to enter, we make our preparatory prayer as usual, begging that all our intentions, thoughts, actions, and endeavours may be directed

uncharitableness, blasphemy, cursing, perjury, evil counsels, scurrility, boasting, vainglory, scoffing, murmuring, and profanity.

To avoid these or other sins of the tongue let us follow the counsels of Eccus. (xxxviii. 28): "Hedge in thine ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue, and make doors and bars to thy mouth: make a balance for thy words, and a just bridle for thy mouth; and take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue;" and that of St. James (i. 19): "Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak," for "in the multitude of words there shall not want sin; but he that refraineth his lips is most wise." (Prov. x. 19.)

Touch.—Any undue care of the body, such as the appliance of the countless means provided by the luxury of modern civilization to promote its comfort and ward off pain—overcare to guard against the cold or protect it from the heat—the use of things calculated to enervate us or to render us effeminate; all these induce occasions of sin, and are unworthy of one who undertakes to follow Christ our Lord.

purely to the praise, honour, and glory of God our Lord and to the sanctification of our souls. We then take some vocal prayer, as the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," some psalm, or prayer of the Church, and repeat it, dwelling upon any word or phrase, making reflections thereon, on its meaning, its application, the dogmatic or moral truths it contains, the obligations it involves, &c. After which follow affections and colloquies which are suitable to the matter on which we are reflecting. When the time is past, if we have not finished the whole prayer, St. Ignatius will have us complete it without pausing, and conclude with a colloquy to the person to whom the prayer is addressed.

This method of prayer is very *easy*, and can be practised by all sorts of persons, in any circumstances of time and place, whether we be sick or well, at home or on a journey; moreover, it is extremely *profitable*, as it accustoms us to recollection and union with God by means of ejaculations during the course of the day, and in our daily duties in which we are liable to dissipation. When on a journey, or indisposed, or suffering from aridity, or desolation of spirit, or when harassed by distracting cares, let us have recourse to this method of prayer and not allow ourselves to contract the time which is assigned to it.

It is also of great advantage to those who have to recite the Divine Office, or to offer the Holy Sacrifice, that they apply this method of prayer to the psalms, or the various prayers of the Canon of the Mass from time to time, as it will promote piety, recollection, and devotion in the performance of these holy Offices of the Church. In like manner, for those who have a habit of reciting certain fixed daily prayers, it will prove of great benefit to apply to them this second method of prayer

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occasionally, as a means of increasing attention and devotion.

I would observe also that as sick persons, who have no appetite and feel a nausea for food and yet require nourishment, have to be induced to take small quantities at very short intervals, so there are certain people of flighty, nervous, and unstable dispositions, who cannot without great difficulty collect their thoughts and fix their minds and imaginations, who must by this method gradually be led on until they can make full use of the different powers of their souls in regular mental prayer.

THIRD METHOD.

In this method of prayer, after the immediate preparation and the usual preparatory petition, we select some prayer, as the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," some psalm, or other prayer of the Church, and repeat it so slowly, and with such pauses, that we take a respiration between one word and another, or between one phrase and another; in the meantime, fixing our minds successively on the signification and meaning of the words which we pronounce, or on the person to whom the prayer is addressed, considering his excellency, holiness, and glory, and our own baseness, vileness, and shame, revering him with pious affection of heart, or begging him to grant or obtain for us the grace or favour which we desire.

It is not to be understood that we are to employ this method while we are reciting the Office, or the Rosary, or other such long prayers, because it would take up such a long time; but it is very profitable to use it now and then, especially at certain short intervals, as for instance whilst going up and down stairs, or from one duty to another, when visiting the Blessed Sacrament, or when we have more leisure time. On account

of our manifold occupations and duties we cannot spend so much time in reciting the Office and other spiritual exercises as those do who live a contemplative life, or whose duties are fewer and less varied, but still on occasions we can pause on the sense of what we say, and thus increase our fervour and devotion.

THE FOURTH WEEK.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The end of this part of the Exercises is to excite us to rejoice at the great joy of our Lord,¹ to confirm our hope,² and thereby expand our hearts, strengthen us in our weakness, and fill us with comfort and courage.³ In this fourth part we ought also to confirm ourselves in the third degree of humility by this new motive, namely, the consideration of the victory which is proposed to us and the grand reward which is promised to us. We may also with fruit consider how the four properties of a glorified body contrast with the four classes of things enumerated in the "Foundation."

2. As the effects of the contemplations of the Resurrection and the Apparitions is to unite the soul more intimately with God, some have complained that St. Ignatius, instead of treating them more fully, as calculated to unite us closely with Jesus Christ by the bonds of holy love which is the crown and fulness of sanctity and perfection, only sets down the contemplations on the Resurrection and on Divine Love. To this Father Suarez⁴ gives a reply, that in the Unitive

¹ *Direct.* xxxvi.

² "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us into a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 St. Peter i. 3.)

³ "But having the same recompense (I speak as to my children) be you also enlarged." (2 Cor. vi. 13.)

⁴ *De Relig.* ix. c. vi. §§ 9, 10.

Way, which is so much commended by the saints, we have to distinguish two things: the first, its beginning; the second, its end and perfection. Now, as to the beginning and entrance into this way which leads to a perfect union with God, and which is capable of being reduced to a certain order and method, St. Ignatius notifies this sufficiently. In order to put us on the way, and he intends nothing more, he points out to us the matter and form which we are to adopt in our contemplation; whereas, as to the end or perfection, which consists in the possession by the soul of God in contemplation,¹ it is a point so sublime and super-

¹ In this higher kind of contemplation, in which, antecedent to any operations of the mind, God acts directly and immediately upon the soul, which in its turn voluntarily assents in a spirit of love, Father Alvarez de Paz distinguishes fifteen different degrees of union between the soul and God. The *first* degree he calls, "Intuition of truth," in which the mind apprehends vividly and without any mental process the perfections of God, or the mysteries of our Lord's Life, or the hollowness of earthly things, or some truth of the sacred writings, &c. This vivid intuition is attended by great self-abasement and ardent love of God.

The *second* degree is that in which God seems to take sudden and sole possession of the powers of the soul, which at once responds by acts of praise and love. If, however, the mind is so filled with admiration as to be unable to do more than admire, and the heart is so full that it cannot express its desires, the contemplative soul is in the *third* degree, which is that of "Spiritual silence."

The *fourth* degree is that of "Quiet" or repose, when the soul simply reposes in the intimate presence of God, who regards it with intense love, although it feels itself most unworthy of His love.

The *fifth* degree is "Union," in which the soul apprehends so clearly the infinite perfections of God, that it feels that nothing can separate it from Him, and the will is so inflamed with love of Him, that it cannot live without Him.

In the *sixth* degree God speaks audibly to the soul, as He did sometimes to the prophets, or as Christ to St. Ignatius, or as our Lady to St. Stanislaus.

The *seventh* degree is "Spiritual sleep or somnolence," in which the soul is as it were totally unconscious of external things and is in no way affected by them, being so to speak inebriated with the wine of God's love and charity.

This is closely connected with the *eighth* degree, which is a more intense state of abstraction from all external things and more intimate union with God.

natural that it cannot be learned by rule or method, but depends entirely on the grace and illumination of the "Holy Ghost, who breatheth where He will."¹

3. Besides kindling in us an ardent desire to love God, St. Ignatius wishes to instil into our souls a total

The *ninth* degree is that of "Rapture," when the soul is as it were forcibly alienated from the body itself as well as from external things, and is absorbed in the contemplation of God and in the love of Him, so that it desires nothing but Him, wishes for nothing but to do and to suffer for Him, whilst at the same time it is overwhelmed with the consciousness of its own misery and unworthiness. In those times the body and the senses often seem to be dead, or sometimes the body is raised in the air, &c.

The *tenth* degree is when God or Christ our Lord or the saints appear in human form to the contemplator. Such sensible communications are of a lower character than those we have alluded to already, appealing as they do to the soul through the medium of the senses; they are also liable to be misleading, as they may be merely the productions of imagination, or the work of the devil transforming himself into an angel of light. They are, therefore, neither to be sought for nor to be in any way encouraged.

Not much unlike the preceding, are the purely imaginary apparitions mentioned in the *eleventh* degree, which suddenly present themselves to the soul engaged in contemplation, and powerfully affect it by drawing to God and to that which is good.

The *twelfth* degree is styled "Intellectual vision." This occurs when Divine or heavenly truths are clearly and directly manifested to the intellect, when occupied in contemplation. Of course this is of a far higher and nobler character than apparitions which appeal to the senses, or to the imagination. It is sometimes preceded or followed by sensible or imaginary representations, which, as we have said, may come from the good angel or from the devil as an angel of light.

The *thirteenth* degree is the "Vision of God in an undefined and obscure manner;" as an object that is indistinctly seen in the morning mist or in the early break of day.

When, however, God manifests His presence, not as it were face to face as the blessed see Him in Heaven, but clearly as an object is seen in the clear daylight, and not in sensible form but as spirit to spirit, it is the *fourteenth* degree or "The admirable manifestation of God." St. Ignatius was favoured by God with frequent experience of all these degrees, and in an especial manner by the grace of the last named.

The *fifteenth* degree is the Beatific Vision, such as the blessed enjoy in Heaven, who see God not through a glass, in a dark manner, but face to face, not as now in part, but known even as they are known. (Alvarez de Paz, *De perfectione vita.*)

¹ St. John iii. 8.

detachment from, and a profound contempt for, all earthly things; and whereas this must be manifested more in our actions than in our words and feelings, we must during this part of the Exercises conceive and form strong resolutions to practise heroic virtues, especially entire resignation and conformity of our will to the will of God, towards which end St. Ignatius directs the whole Exercises.¹

4. As to the manner of meditating in this part, it is quite the same as is laid down in the meditations on the Life of Christ in the preceding parts, considering in each mystery the persons, the words, and the actions. However, we must add two special considerations in each point: namely, how the Divinity which during the Passion of our Lord suspended its action and concealed itself so that He might suffer the more, now displays itself by real and most holy miraculous effects; and secondly, how He fulfils the offices of a true friend, consoling, teaching, and encouraging His disciples. These will help to enkindle His love in us and to unite us more closely and firmly with Himself.

5. In the Additions the following changes are also to be observed: First, as soon as we awake, we must represent to ourselves our Lord all joyful and in glory, thereby to excite in ourselves sentiments of joy and love and a vehement desire to do all we can to please and glorify Him. Secondly, forgetting our own miseries and trials, we are to entertain those thoughts which are calculated to promote spiritual joy, hopefulness, and cheerful peace; as also to take advantage of the light and of the sunshine and of the views of natural beauty, and the like, as far as we may judge them to be conducive to help us to rejoice in our Creator and Redeemer.

Lastly, unless it be a time of fasting and abstinence,

¹ Suarez, ix. c. vi. §§ 6, 7.

we remit our penances, but at the same time must be careful to observe the rules of temperance and moderation.

6. In fine, we shall best secure the fruit of this closing part of the Exercises by cultivating a loving and affective presence of God; now admiring His infinite perfections, now dwelling on His goodness; at one time desiring to possess Him, at another protesting that we covet nothing but to praise and please Him. It is thus that our soul becomes transformed, and we may reap more benefit from this than from all the rest of the Exercises, for the heart of man is like wax which much more easily yields to an impression when softened by fire than when it is impressed by a cold stamp of iron.

But all this will be mere grimace, if meanwhile we foster attachment to the things of this world, for unless our hearts are purified and free from all affection for this world we cannot hope that they can ever be inflamed with Divine love.

7. Often exercitants experience in this part of their retreat great aridity and desolation; either because they are getting fatigued, or because they find the resolutions which they are only beginning to observe are very trying, or because they are tempted by the devil, who by these means wishes to frustrate the end of these meditations, which is to cheer us and confirm us in our election,¹ and to give us facility, courage, and strength to reduce it to practice.

¹ *Direct.* xxxvi.

THE RESURRECTION.¹

The glorious Resurrection of our Lord and His apparition to His Blessed Mother will afford the subject of our first contemplation.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord expired on the Cross, and His Body was laid in the tomb, but His Soul descended into Limbo, where He freed the souls of the just therein detained. On the third day He resumed His now glorified Body, rose from the dead, and appeared to His Mother.

Prelude 2.—We will visit in turn Limbo, the sepulchre, and the house in which our Blessed Lady was staying.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that we may have real devotion, and rejoice with our Blessed Lord and our Lady, and may daily increase in solid and practical love of God.

Point 1.—Why did our Lord's Soul at once hasten to Limbo? (a) To follow the same path that all holy souls of the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous had taken before Him; but mainly, (β) to comfort them and give them in person the glad news that the redemption of man was now perfected, and that their imprisonment was at an end. Oh, the generous and loving Heart of

¹ "And behold there was a great earthquake. For an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the Angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid." (St. Matt. xxviii. 2-6.)

our Lord! His first thought and concern is to console His friends and make them the sharers of His joy and happiness. What a stupendous change does His presence produce! The comparative gloom of centuries flies away before His dazzling beauty, and He presents to their enraptured gaze the Divine Essence, investing them with the Beatific Vision, and "enlightened them who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death." Let us ponder how these souls adored, praised, and poured out their thanksgiving to their Divine Deliverer. Some had been detained for three thousand years and more, in separation from God: there were also the prophets and patriarchs who had foretold the coming of the Redeemer, and had for so long ardently desired it. And now the happy day has come, the gates of Heaven are opened, the chains of sin are broken, and these holy souls are free to grace the triumph of the great Liberator. Oh, what feeling of gratitude and love must swell their souls. Let us catch the infection, and with them rejoice and thank our Lord for this our glorious redemption.

Point 2.—Let us now accompany our Lord as He leads forth these souls to the holy sepulchre, to show them His dead Body, that they might see how much it cost Him to redeem us and in His deep wounds the depth of love with which He loved us.

Then, after we have paused once more to see the havoc which our sins have wrought in His adorable Body, behold He reunites His Soul to it and rescues it from the jaws of death, and fills it with Divine and glorified life, whilst the hosts of Heaven gather round it in adoration as it rises up immortal and imperishable, and adorned with heavenly beauty and glory. A few moments ago it was black and blue and stained with blood, battered, torn, and butchered, stiff, and lifeless:

now the wounds are blazing suns, life immortal is burst forth, it is agile and impassible, it is clothed with majesty and absolute sovereignty. How enraptured are they all as they gaze upon this awful transfiguration. Truly, Jesus is a true friend to make His friends so truly happy. Well then let us love Him, let us confide in Him. Let us love Him and banish all other love which is not loved in Him, by Him, with Him, and for Him; for He is alone worthy of our love appalled as He is with glory and Divine beauty, and adorned with those Five Wounds which He still retains in testimony of His love for us. How can we, if we have hearts at all, withhold a particle of them? Or how can we admire or love any object but Him?

Let us have unbounded confidence in Him, for He has merited for us that we too shall put on immortality and incorruption, and so too shall be with our Lord for ever. Therefore, let us take courage and be determined to suffer much and labour hard for Him, inasmuch as we are sure "if we sustain with Him, also shall we reign,"¹ and in proportion as we shall share in His labours, shall we also partake of His reward.

Point 3.—Let us then accompany our Lord with His glorious retinue on His visit to His ever-Blessed Mother.² We may picture her all afflicted and disconsolate, retired and absorbed in prayer, and expecting with a lively faith and unshaken confidence the

¹ "A faithful saying. For if we be dead with Him, we shall live also with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Timothy ii. 12.)

² Although the Scriptures are silent as to the apparition to our Blessed Lady, whilst they recount the various manifestations of Jesus to the disciples, Apostles, and to the holy women, St. Ignatius equivalently asserts it, and observes that "the Scripture supposes that we have intelligence and sense, as it is written: Are you also yet without understanding." Father Alvarez observes that it rests also upon an unbroken and universal tradition. Our Lord too revealed to St. Theresa that His first appearance was to His Blessed Mother.

Resurrection of her beloved Child. God, who dispenses His graces and favours according to our confidence and desires, did not delay to comfort her. Oh, what a meeting must that have been! Oh, what overpowering consolation, what mutual overwhelming love! Surely it required the power of God to prevent it from proving fatal and destroying her natural life, proportioned as it was to her inexpressible dolours, and also to the love which she bore to Him. Let us rejoice with her, and congratulate her, and take heart to suffer now and to be faithful to our resolutions, that later we may also be comforted.

Let us make the three colloquies, one to our Lady, one to our Lord, and one to the Eternal Father, and end with "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO MAGDALENE.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Mary Magdalene and two other pious women, taking with them precious ointments and spices, went to embalm the Body of our Lord: but not finding it in the sepulchre, they beheld instead an Angel who gave them news of the Resurrection. Magdalene,

¹ "And on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre; and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. . . . But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; and she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head, and another at the feet where the Body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord: and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; and she knew not that it was Jesus. . . . Jesus saith to her, Mary. She turning to Him, saith to Him, Rabboni (which is to say, Master). Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." (St. John xx. 1—17.)

however, continued to weep and search here and there for her beloved Master, who appeared to her in the dress of a gardener.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit place ourselves at the tomb and observe what passes.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg the grace of spiritual joy and intense love of our Lord, and unbounded confidence in Him.

Point 1.—These three pious women brought aromatic spices and ointments, and went with great anxiety to embalm the Body of Jesus, not thinking that He had arisen. Let us admire their love and affection, and constancy towards Him even after death. How delighted is God with those who are faithful in His service, not only when comforted and strengthened by special graces, but also in desolation, trials, and spiritual dryness.

It was not surprising that they followed our Lord when they could behold Him, saw His miracles, heard His sermons, and beheld Him greeted as the Messiah: but they loved Him more after seeing Him die in ignominy and amidst the mockery and blasphemies of the priests and people. And on their way their fidelity was tried. "Who would roll back the stone from the mouth of the grave?" And again, they feared the soldiers, who might debar them from carrying out their design. But love and devotion and a firm will to do this office to their Divine Master overcame every difficulty; and God rewarded their constancy: for they found that the soldiers had fled, the stone was rolled back, and instead of the Body they beheld an Angel, who gave them the joyful news of the glorious Resurrection. Let us learn to expect many difficulties in our way, but also many graces whereby to overcome them. Thus during these Exercises we have planned out a line of life in imitation of the example of our Blessed Lord, a

life of detachment, of constant mortification, and of zeal to promote in ourselves and in others the praise, service, and glory of God. These are our fragrant ointments and spices. But the devil and self-love and our own faint-heartedness will cry out within us, "Who will roll back the stone?" To these will be added worldly respects, jeers of companions, the example of the lukewarm—all these, too, are the big stone which must be rolled back! But let us imitate the pious women, let us persist, and the Almighty will roll back the stone! Let us seriously and resolutely stand to our election, and to the resolutions which by His grace we have made, and He will do the rest: for He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength.¹

Point 2.—The women, affrighted, ran to inform the Apostles. Then Magdalene hastened back to the tomb, and tarried about shedding bitter tears for the absence of the Sacred Body, which she thought was stolen; again and again she went and looked into the sepulchre. In vain the two angels by their questions strove to comfort her, and she turned aside to go and seek the object of her love. Our Lord, in the garb of a gardener, confronts her, and at once she begs Him to inform her where they have put the corpse; He reveals Himself by His voice, and addresses her by her name and displays to her His glorified Humanity, whilst at the same time He fills her heart with joy and consolation in reward of her love and constancy. Oh! the generous love and bounty of our Lord. Let us fall with her at His feet and make our acts of adoration and of love of Him, who is so fond of us, that if we seek Him with love and perseverance, He will come to visit us with

¹ "Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

His consolations. And when in desolation we fancy we have lost Him, let us persevere in seeking after Him, and we shall soon find Him.

Point 3.—But most of all, we must throw ourselves with unbounded confidence upon our dear Lord. For to whom does He make His first appearance (after that to His Blessed Mother), before even showing Himself to the other pious women or to the Apostles? And what merit had she to be thus distinguished above the rest? Had she not been a sinner in the city? Was it not out of her that He had driven seven devils? Yet she is singularly beloved and specially honoured! Our Lord had forgiven the past; He looks only at what we are, not at what we have been, and loves most those who most love and seek Him. Oh! how this should enlarge our hearts to confide in Him and to love and serve Him! He will receive us with the greater tenderness if, having sinned with Magdalene, we imitate her repentance. We will then offer up to Him a firm resolution to love and serve Him, and this, the more faithfully, the greater have been our sins, and let us beg Him to increase our love and confidence.

End with "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE HOLY WOMEN.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The holy women, finding the tomb open and being told by the Angel that our Lord had arisen, went at his bidding to announce the glad tidings to the Apostles. On the way our Lord appeared to them.

Prelude 2.—Accompany them in spirit on the way, and adore our Lord with them.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg a share in the love and in the joy of these pious women.

Point 1.—Our Lord did not appear to the women when they looked into the sepulchre, but the Angel bade them go and tell the Apostles that He had arisen. They believed and promptly obeyed, and as they hurried on the way Jesus met them. This was to show us the reward which God attaches to lively faith and obedience. Let us learn to regard all Superiors in a spirit of faith as holding the place of God, and to carry out promptly and cheerfully the orders which they give us, and thus we shall secure the signal favour of God and a special blessing on all we do. To hear willingly, to take counsel, and humbly submit our judgment, is sure to be rewarded with a clear illustration how to manage and to act in even most difficult matters.

Point 2.—*The endearing manner in which our Lord appears.*—Jesus met them, courteously saluted them, and bade them take courage and not be afraid. How consoled and inflamed with love were they to see a God, and to be greeted by Him. When will that happy time come

¹ "And they went out quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples. And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail. But they came up and took hold of His feet, and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see Me." (St. Matt. xxviii. 8—10.)

when we shall be practically convinced that true peace and solid happiness are only to be found in God? We see it in the saints, whose joy and tranquillity were never disturbed amidst worldly adversity, cruel sufferings and hardships, because Jesus was ever present to them, and they felt assured of His love and protection. If we do not experience these effects, is it not because we do not serve Him thoroughly and are negligent and lukewarm? Let us make the colloquy which our hearts will suggest.

Point 3.—The Message.—“Tell My brethren to go into Galilee, there they shall see Me.” They had abandoned Him in His Passion, ran away or denied Him, they lend an incredulous ear to Magdalene, and regarded her news as the dreams and imaginings of a woman; and one would naturally suppose that our Lord would cease to care for them, or that His message would be one of reproach for their ingratitude, cowardice, and incredulity, but no! it was a message of kindness, of news that He had arisen, and of a promise to meet them. He calls them His brothers, to give them courage and to show that He still loves them. Let us admire Him for His benignity, and thank Him for the honour done to us in making us His brothers, and let us determine to prove ourselves worthy of it.

End with “Our Father.”

THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, were discoursing on the late sad events when they were overtaken by a person who joined in their conversation. On arriving at the inn He sat with them at table, and at length they recognized Him to be Jesus by the breaking of bread.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the road of seven miles, the inn, and the supper.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg our Lord to be our comfort in our sadness and trials.

Point 1.—Let us reflect on the gloom and distress of the disciples at witnessing the rage of the priests and people against the followers of the Divine Master whom they had crucified. How, oppressed with anguish and disappointment at the loss of Him whom they had looked upon as the Redeemer of Israel, they had given up all hopes, as He had been buried nearly three days, and they heard no more of Him. How often does our Lord act thus with those who love Him? They seem deprived of all lights, of all spiritual comforts, and of all signs of His presence; and conse-

¹ "And behold, two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He said to them, What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad? . . . Then He said to them, O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered, and so to enter into His glory? . . . And their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight." (St. Luke xxiv. 13—31.)

quently are depressed, fearing that they have lost God and His grace, and suffer faintness, desolation, and aridity. Yet it is just then that He is nearest them. It is the trial which He allows to His servants when He intends to confer some great grace upon them. Let us learn in such cases to be patient, to humble ourselves, and to pour out our hearts more fervently in converse with Him as did these disciples, and foster a more lively confidence in Him.

Point 2.—The dispositions which our Lord required in His disciples before making Himself known to them were: first, that they should disclose to Him their melancholy and their languishing faith; secondly, by His discourse He stirs up their faith and rouses up their fervour and devotion; thirdly, He excites their earnestness and charity by pretending that He would leave them. So if we have grown cold in the service of God, we should seek succour and advice from our spiritual director, we should meditate on things eternal, and use sweet violence with God to come and remain with us by constant and persevering prayer.

Point 3.—The disciples knew Him in the blessing of bread. As it is commonly supposed, He rewarded them with a view of His glory and gave them Holy Communion. If we approach with faith, confidence, love, and desire to this Holy Sacrament, we too shall quickly find that we shall know our Lord ever more clearly and shall also love Him more dearly.

End with "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES IN THE SUPPER-ROOM.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—When all the Apostles, except Thomas, were gathered together and were scared with fear, Jesus appeared in their midst, and imparted to them the Holy Ghost, together with the power to forgive sins.

Prelude 2.—Let us put ourselves in spirit in that famous Cenacle, &c.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg grace to appreciate the goodness and mercy of our Lord.

Point 1.—The disciples were all together, united by holy charity with our dear Lord and with each other; it is to such that He loves to come, and wherever He is there He gives also peace and comfort. But whoever is not animated by fraternal charity, is a stranger to peace even with himself, for Jesus is not in him. Hence let us study to preserve and promote union and charity, to fly from special attractions and aversions, and from backbiting and detraction; and to be gentle, meek, forgiving, and self-sacrificing. A house wherein charity prevails is a heaven, but where it is absent it is a hell. At all cost to self and to our own feelings we must cultivate charity.

¹ "Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be to you. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again, Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (St. John xx. 19-23. Comp. St. Luke xxiv.)

Point 2.—As yet they are incredulous and slow to believe that our Lord has risen. He does not reprimand them, but actually condescends to show them His hands and feet and side, not only to give them a palpable sign of His Resurrection, but also to gently reprove them for so soon forgetting His love for them. Let us picture the tenderness, love, and joy with which the sight inspired them, and with what ecstasy they gazed upon His blazing Wounds; devoutly kissed them and wet them with their hot tears. Picture Him as He shows each, and the words of love which He breathes at the same time. Oh! let us show Him our hands and hearts in return—not the *hands only*, in the pulpit or confessional, or visiting the sick, or in other external duties, which may be prompted by ambition, interest, rivalry, or vanity, but also our *hearts* by our good and pure intentions, by fidelity in prayer, by practical love of Him, and by scrupulous observance of all our holy rules, and especially by conquering ourselves in whatever is repugnant to our human nature; our love of Him will progress by how much we do violence to our own selves.¹

Point 3.—Jesus breathed upon them and imparted the Holy Ghost to them, and with the same commission which He had from His Father does He also commission them. Let us reflect in what manner He was sent. He was sent in poverty and in contempt, was persecuted, and died in ignominy and sorrow, and in this manner He wrought the redemption of the world. The disciple must not be above the Master, wherefore let us be well persuaded that to convert and save souls, we too must suffer much, must suffer persecutions and affronts, must sacrifice reputation and ease, and, if need be, even life itself.

And what a comfort and honour it should be to us

¹ "Tantum proficies quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris." (à Kempis.)

to undergo all this when we see that we are treated like our dear Lord! If we had a real and lively faith, with what courage and joy this thought would inspire us.

Let us beg most earnestly of our Lord that He will give us this spirit and courage, and let us offer ourselves to suffer any hardship for His sake, *Da quod jubes et jube quod vis.*

Making a fervent colloquy, let us end with "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES AND ST. THOMAS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—On the eighth day after His Resurrection, when Thomas was with the other Apostles, Jesus appears and bids Thomas to test His Wounds: upon which he confesses his fault, and thus repairs the scandal which he had given.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit place ourselves in the Cenacle.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg a spirit of docility to God's holy inspirations.

Point 1.—We know not the reason of the Apostle's absence; but whatever it was it cost him dear, as he lost the visit of our Lord, and fell into the sin of incredulity. This should teach us to adhere to disci-

¹ "After eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed." (St. John xx. 26—29.)

pline and great fidelity in all public duties. Further, it should show us the necessity of great circumspection, for from small matters and imperfections, dismal consequences may ensue. Thus, from his absence from the rest Thomas fell so shamefully, and was on the point of losing his faith and all the merit of his apostleship. We may begin with a certain negligence and infidelity in our service of God; thence we proceed with our eyes open to commit deliberate venial sins, and afterwards may end by mortal sin. Another lesson we ought to take to heart is to perform our spiritual duties in due time, and as far as possible with the rest of the community. Woe to us if we spend that time in study, chatting, or sleeping! By so doing we not only shall lose those visits with which our Lord is wont to reward the faithful and fervent, but we shall expose ourselves to some considerable faults owing to the withdrawal of grace. We sometimes are surprised that we have no feeling of fervour or devotion, and our spiritual duties are performed in coldness and aridity, and it seems as if our Lord had turned His face from us; perhaps it comes from not performing them in proper time, from interrupting or contracting them, and if so, let us apply a remedy at once, and thus endeavour to merit the visits of our Lord.

Point 2.—After persisting in his incredulity for eight days, Thomas was with the rest, and our Blessed Lord appears again, and with Him He brings peace: and in His infinite gentleness and condescension bids Thomas to test His Wounds and not be so incredulous. He comes on purpose to comfort and strengthen His undeserving Apostle. He will not let him perish. St. Thomas, amazed and reclaimed, threw himself at His feet, and made his profound act of faith. Oh! how often, *very* often has our Lord shown this condescension and mercy to us—how many illustrations of

mind, how many aspirations of heart, has He sent to us. How many miracles of grace has He wrought in our souls, to put us and keep us in the sure way of salvation! Let us contemplate this our good Lord; let us kiss His Wounds, let us press His Blessed Heart, and let us protest our fidelity for the future, for He alone shall be our Lord and our God.

Point 3.—Jesus says, “Blessed they who have not seen, but have believed.” This is a great maxim of spiritual life; not to be guided by outward considerations, and by the judgment of the senses, for such are spiritually blind, but rather by the spirit of faith, which is the *argumentum non apparentium*. Do we direct ourselves by the principles of holy faith in our functions, resolutions, and conduct, or only according to our fancy and genius, or according to human and worldly motives? If ordered anything by our Superiors, do we consider it a wrong done to us, or complain that it will discredit us, or that it goes against our humour, convenience, and ease? We are always on a precipice, and liable to fall, if we do not cultivate the spirit of holy faith, and act from supernatural motives. For in supernatural life we have seen that we must suffer, and suffer much: and mere natural motives are quite insufficient to enable us to persevere in it. It is only by acting for the love of God that we shall lay up stores of merit, and shall enjoy even on earth an unspeakable beatitude.

End with colloquy and “Our Father.”

THE APPARITION TO THE APOSTLES ON LAKE TIBERIAS.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Peter and John and the other disciples were engaged in fishing in the Sea of Tiberias, when Jesus, on the shore, makes Himself known to them by the miraculous capture; they hasten to throw themselves at His feet; He invites them to eat, and entertains them.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the scene, and hear and note all that transpires.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg the grace to rejoice at the goodness of our Lord, who shows Himself our companion, and helps us in all circumstances of life.

Point 1.—The Apostles had laboured all night to no purpose, when our Lord appeared and bade them cast their net on the right of their boat, and it was found at once full of fish. John, the clean of heart, saw it was Jesus, and told Peter. Jesus by this miracle would show them that, as He was going to make them fishers of men, the two dispositions which would be required of them to secure success, were diffidence in themselves and absolute confidence in Him. These two virtues are necessary to secure the blessing of God, and without

¹ "And they went forth and entered into the ship: and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come Jesus stood on the shore: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus, therefore, said to them: Children, have you any meat? They said to Him: No. He said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast, therefore: and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. . . . Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. . . . Jesus saith to them: Come and dine: and none of them who were at meat durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." (St. John xxi. 3-13.)

that blessing all our labour and talents are quite useless: "God alone can give the increase."¹ From Him alone can we expect success, and from Him must we strive to obtain it by living a holy life, by prayer, by acting with a pure intention. It is not by talents, nor by brilliant discourses, nor by making a great show that souls are to be gained to God. Let us convince ourselves of this.

Point 2.—Our Lord invites them to come and eat: and He took into His blessed hands bread, and gave to them, and fish in like manner. Oh, the goodness, the humility, the thoughtfulness of our sweet Lord, in His friendly and familiar treatment of these poor fishermen! As long as we are labouring for souls we are like fishermen on the sea, filled with anxiety, overwhelmed with labours, and pressed by cares and works of charity, and when this is over we must go to shore, to some convenient place with Jesus, to look to ourselves and resume new strength, lest whilst preaching to others we become ourselves castaways. We must so devote ourselves to our neighbours as not to forget ourselves or neglect the care of our own souls; and by prayer and interior exercises must obtain from Jesus that food of solid virtues without which all labour for our neighbours would be ineffectual.

Point 3.—Then our Lord addressed Peter,² putting

¹ "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.)

² "When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Be a shepherd to My lambs. He saith to him a third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me. . . . He said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep." (St. John xxi. 15—17.)

to him three times the same question, and asking him if he loved Him. This made Peter sad, and mistrustful of himself, for it brought back to him his former presumption, self-confidence, and fall, but yet he answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Then our Lord gave him His Divine commission of feeder and ruler of His flock, and bade him to follow Him. At once Peter definitely left all else and followed Him. So those called to the sacred ministry have their share in this two-fold commission. They have to feed the flock of Christ with sermons, with the sacraments, with spiritual instructions. But before doing so we must put this question to ourselves, Do we love God more than the rest? Have we true and solid virtue, are we devout and fervent more than ordinary and common, so as to be able to share it with others? What good can we expect to produce in our neighbours if they do not see us more holy than themselves, less attached to our own ease or interest, less irascible, impatient, ambitious, and uncharitable than themselves? Wherefore we should often put this question to ourselves, "Dost thou love Me more than these?" And then only shall we be worthy apostles, when with Peter we can say, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Again, that we may produce fruit in souls we must obey the call to follow Christ. We have made the resolution now, and we have made it often before; let us never lose sight of it again. Let us ever have before us the example of our Lord, and how He thought, spoke, and acted; and in every circumstance of life let us copy His example.

In our colloquy, let us commence with our Lord and ask Him to let us see any attachment which may mar the truth that we love Him more than these, and to give us the grace to root it out of our souls, and also to give us the grace to resolve and to persevere in the

resolution to follow Him, whithersoever He may be pleased to lead us. End with "Our Father."

THE ASCENSION.¹

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—After our Lord had spent forty days comforting and teaching His Apostles, He met them for the last time in the memorable Cenacle in Jerusalem, to eat with them and address them before parting. He then led them to Mount Olivet, and in their presence He was taken up into Heaven. Two angels are sent to awaken them out of their ecstasy, and to inform them that He will come again to judge all men, as they have seen Him going up to Heaven.

Prelude 2.—Let us place ourselves as humble spectators of this mystery.

Prelude 3.—Let us pray that the remembrance of this glory may give us courage to face and conquer every difficulty.

Point 1.—*The circumstances preceding the Ascension.*—Jesus had appointed as the place of His Ascension the Mount of Olives, not Thabor, to teach us that the way to Heaven is by suffering and the Cross; and whether we will it or not, we must of necessity pass through these trials which Providence has arranged for our sanctification. Again, He begins His discourse with His disciples by reproaching some of them with their slowness of belief in the truth of His Resurrection, on

¹ "And when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to Heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven." (Acts i. 9—12.)

the evidence of those who had seen Him. Let us take this reproach to ourselves. During our retreat has He not often spoken to us reproachfully, either by Himself or through others? This may be bitter, but, if we accept it, it brings peace, for it is done through love—*Ego quos amo, arguo*¹—and we must accept it in the same loving spirit.

He tells them that they shall be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem and to the bounds of the earth, to make known to men what He had done and suffered out of love for them, and to inflame their hearts with love for Him in return. This He deserves at our hands, and if we have a spark of feeling, of love, or gratitude, we should labour to carry out this commission, by sacrificing our lives to promote the glory of God, and to make known to the world the nobility, the merit, the goodness, and mercy of Jesus Christ. On this and to this we should devote all our words, actions, thoughts, nay, our lives themselves. This we ought to do the more earnestly in order to repair for our past coldness and indifference. Let us admire the gentleness and love which He displays to all as He sits with them at table, and the humility and condescension which by His example He inculcates. He who is in the possession of infinite glory and is shortly to manifest it, appears amongst them without any outward sign of it. Oh, what a lesson for us to hide the graces and gifts of God, to be humble, affable, and unassuming in our intercourse with others.

Point 2.—The manner of His Ascension.—When they had all reached the top of Olivet, He cast His eyes upon them to give them the last farewell, and lifted His hands to bless them, and began to ascend into the air, whilst His Mother and the Apostles and disciples gazed in silent wonder on His Sacred

¹ Apoc. iii. 19.

Humanity, which, as it rose towards Heaven, blazed far brighter than the sun, until at length a cloud gathered under His feet and cut Him off from their sight. Let us ponder the mixed feelings which took possession of their souls. Admiration of His beauty and glory; intense love of His goodness, joy at the sight of His triumph, and sorrow for His departure. Oh, what a dreary thing does all this world appear to them without Jesus in it! So it should be with us. If we have not Jesus with us, God help us! but if we have Him, what should we care for all else in the world? Henceforth let our conversation be in Heaven, and let us care but for one thing on earth, and that is to make Him known, praised, and loved, despite hardships, persecutions, and death itself.

Having ascended to Heaven, He flings open the gates for the first time, and, amidst the acclamations of the angelic hosts, He takes possession of the Kingdom which He has purchased for us at the price of His Most Precious Blood and infinite merits.¹ Oh, let us congratulate our sweet Lord and offer Him our whole hearts, protesting that henceforth He shall be the only object of our love in life and death.

Point 3.—Whilst the disciples stood with eyes and hearts raised in ecstasy towards the object which they had lost, two angels were despatched by our Lord to remind them that in due time He would return as they had seen Him go, and in the Day of Judgment He would come for them, would glorify them in body and soul, and would take them to share with Him His everlasting glory. Wherefore, sustained by this cheering

¹ "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord who is strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." (Psalm xxiii. 7—9.)

hope for the loss they had experienced, they returned in great joy to Jerusalem.

Such, too, must be our comfort amidst all the fatigues, hardships, and sufferings in the service of God. The joyful day will dawn when our Lord will come for us, and will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Let us make our colloquies and end with "Our Father."

THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves in spirit in those realms of bliss.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg an earnest desire to attain a share in the glory of the saints, and the grace so to live that we may secure it.

Point 1.—In Paradise there is absence of all evil. Over its gates is written, "Here there is no death, wailing, or sorrow," &c. When we enter there, there is an end of trouble, hardships, anxieties, fears, adversities, pains, and persecutions. There God will dry up our tears and will welcome us. Let us as we contemplate this, resolve to be patient and desire to suffer much in this life for the love of God, knowing that the sufferings will soon be over, but the reward will never end. Oh, blessed sufferings which will have such a reward! Let us determine at all costs to secure it. If on this earth there was any spot where all evil and misery were unknown, everybody would go through fire and water to secure it; and shall we be less in earnest when it is a question of Heaven, and when at the same time at such a small cost we can succeed in gaining it? How the sacrifices made by the children of this world

to gain a little short-lived happiness should be a stimulus to us!

Point 2.—In Paradise there is the possession of all good. There is the aggregate of every kind of good, and all enjoyed in the highest degree of perfection. In this world the goods we can enjoy are few and scanty, and often cannot be enjoyed together, as they are incompatible one with another, and through the defectiveness of our senses and faculties the pleasure derived from them is very slight, nay, sometimes it ends in nausea and disquiet, whereas in Heaven the faculties and powers of soul and body will be so strengthened that they will be able to enjoy every good, and with such intense rapture and transport, that we shall be most perfectly satisfied. And here we may ponder five classes of goods.

(*a*) The place itself, magnificent, delightful, and sumptuous beyond all imagination, in comparison with which the beauty, magnificence, and splendour of this world will seem no more than a wretched and loathsome hovel, and stamped with squalor.

(*β*) The delightful company and society of the elect, all united by the closest bonds of glowing love and charity, where each one's happiness adds to that of all the rest, and the glory and beauty of one adds to that of all the others.

(*γ*) We shall enjoy a most distinct knowledge of all things created.

(*δ*) Our glorified bodies will be gifted with brightness, agility, impassibility, and immortality.

(*ε*) Above all, we shall feast on the sight of God and on His love, by virtue of which each of the elect can say, "I possess a God, and in Him all good and all sovereign good." Reflect on each and all the goods we might possibly enjoy in this world, and compare them with what we expect to possess in Heaven, and

how truly shall we be able to say with St. Ignatius: *Quam sordet mihi terra cum cælum aspicio*. In truth, the world is a liar. It makes a false and empty show and golden promises; it pours in our ears words, words; but they are *vox et præterea nihil*. The world by its wiles and flattery leads us to expect great things, but gives us nothing, or at most but little, and that not for long. How different is the conduct of our Lord, who, like a sincere and true friend, promises and will give us all, and "this all is comprised in two syllables,"¹ *Dens*—"God," in whom we have the fulfilment of all our desires. Let us then look upon all things in this world as so much dirt, deserving of our disdain and contempt, and cheerfully deprive ourselves of them.²

Point 3.—Its possession is eternal. What transports of bliss will be ours, on reaching that harbour of peace, to feel it is for ever, and never can be lost; to be out of all danger; to be safe; never more to fear, never more evil, never more anxiety or care: *Semper cum Domino erimus*. Let this thought cause us to fly from imperfections and evil habits, and to transform the whole tenour of our lives. If we are to put on the new man in Heaven, we must throw off the old man in this life; to secure this eternal peace, we must use violence to ourselves in time.

If we could now consult the saints in Heaven, what counsel would they give us but that which by His words and example Jesus Christ has given us—now to be poor, detached from all things, to be mortified and humble. The more we excel in these, the greater will be our glory in Heaven.

End with "Our Father."

¹ St. Augustine.

² Hebrews x. 34.

ON LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine our Lord striving to win the hearts of men. Some by the motive that they have offended Him, others by the motive of His love for them, and others by His own loveliness.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg Him to set us on fire with love for Him.

Point 1.—Because we have offended Him, we are bound to love Him. To think how glorious and noble and lovable a person is God and how infinitely good He is; and, on the other hand, how blind, mean, and mad one has been to have offended and betrayed Him, is enough to torture a soul and to overwhelm it with sorrow. Now let us reflect how we have treated our Lord till now. Let us see Him tied to the pillar, black and blue and mangled. How many cruel stripes have we inflicted on that beautiful Body—how my sins have wounded Him! What barbarous creatures we have been to treat Him worse than a dog! What can we do to atone for this cruelty? The child who in a sally of passion has laid hands on a loving mother, on coming to himself and seeing the sad effects of his anger, is inconsolable in his grief, and strives to prove the intensity of his love by the intensity of his sorrow and the sacrifices which love prompts him to make in reparation. So should it be with us. We have greatly offended Jesus Christ, and that for a long time. We were blind and mad to be so ungrateful: we surely cannot rest satisfied with a partial love in return. We must love more than others and more intensely, and must love the more ardently the greater the sins by which we have offended. And then to think how He

behaved to us all the time that we were sinning against Him! So gentle, so patient, nay, actually heaping upon our souls fresh and signal graces at the very time we were insulting Him, mercifully seeking after us whilst we were trying to escape from Him, and showing His Wounds by and for us inflicted upon Him to His Eternal Father, thereby to screen us from the punishments which else would have fallen upon us, and which we most richly deserved. Oh! when we only think of this, what a powerful motive does it not become to strive to blot out our cruelty and black ingratitude, by trying hard to love Him thoroughly in future. While He held out His hand to embrace us, we have plunged the dagger into His blessed Heart and nailed His hands to the Cross, and yet He offered the Blood that came forth from the Wounds we made, to wash away our guilt. O heavens! how could we treat such goodness with such black ingratitude? We could not have done it even to a dumb animal. This thought is enough to break our hearts and inflame them with love. At the feet of our dear Lord, let us think how He has treated us and how we have treated Him; surely our cheeks will burn with shame and our hearts with love at the harrowing thought.

Point 2.—Let us next see how He has loved us. This we can never know or understand adequately; but when we first enter Heaven and give the first kiss on His Sacred Side, we shall see within that opening the furnace of the charity which glows in His noble Heart for us. At present we may muse on what He has done for us and the much He has undergone for us, which are the best tokens of His ardent love. Our poor souls found a place in His Sacred Heart from all eternity, for then He resolved and decreed His many favours which He was to confer on us in time. Even then He preferred us to so many who would have

proved more deserving objects of His love. He has given us being and life for so many years, health, senses, conveniences, so many goods of nature, and all these almost without our adverting to them. And then if we come to supernatural goods, how many of them and of what immense value! and at the infinite cost of His Passion and Death. Such are our call to the true faith, our reception of the sacraments, His overflowing of our hearts with great and countless graces, illustrations, and affections—sins so often pardoned, temptations overcome, dangerous occasions removed. And as if all this was not enough, He would be consumed Himself for love of us. His precious Life all employed in our behalf and for our advantage, to be born in a vile stable, to labour long and hard in an ignoble shop, to journey poor and weary and come to teach us the way to Heaven, and finally to breathe out His Soul amid incredible torments and the utmost ignominies. Oh, how could He, God though He is, give me greater proofs of His love? Now we can understand why He would have His Sacred Side opened, that in His blessed Heart each of us might find a place. Surely if we have any hearts at all we must at the sight of so many favours, labours, and wounds, at the sight of so much Blood we must cry out with the Apostle, *Charitas Christi urget nos*. "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me." Oh, that we could say with truth: "Tell Him, my Beloved, that I am languishing with love."¹

Point 3.—He is lovely and lovable in Himself. The saints who knew Jesus Christ, have never been able to find words in which to express their thoughts or ideas of the excellencies in Him which inflame them with love. The Blessed Trinity in the Incarnation framed an object most worthy of the love of God and of men,

¹ Cant. v. 8.

and therefore endowed it with all goodness and perfection, with all grace and beauty. If we consider Him as God, He is the great ocean from which all that is lovely on earth or in the universe is but a thin streamlet; if as Man, He is the worthy Son of the loveliest of women—gifted with such charms and majesty that even as an Infant the bare sight of Him set the hearts of shepherds and kings alike on fire with love for Him. At twelve, when He spoke in the Temple, doctors and priests hung on His lips; throughout His Life, His conduct was so mild and sweet, His Heart so compassionate and tender, that all His thoughts, words, and actions were directed solely to the advantage of mankind, and even on the Cross His bowed Head, expanded arms, and gaping side all challenged our love.

But if His Humanity was so lovely on earth, what it is now that it is glorified, who can conceive? That Humanity, which of all the created objects in Paradise, is the loveliest! The view and possession of it by the saints in Heaven will for all eternity constitute the object of their adoration, admiration, and praise, and, next to the Beatific Vision, will form their greatest source of happiness. Yes! there we shall love Him with all our heart and soul, but it will be a love without merit, because His infinite goodness and beauty irresistibly demands all love. Let us then begin now to love Him with all our might, while our love is meritorious, and turns in some measure to His greater glory as coming from free agents.

Let us conclude by making fervent acts of love of our dear Lord, and let us offer ourselves without reserve to Him, protesting that henceforth He shall be the only object of our love in life and death, and we will make three colloquies: to our Blessed Lady, to the Sacred Humanity of our Divine Lord, and to the

Eternal Father; humbly imploring grace to keep this holy resolution. End with "Our Father."

CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL.

NOTE.—The love for our Lord does not consist merely in that tender affection which we feel in meditating on His sublime loveliness and affection, which, unless manifested and proved by actions, is by no means sufficient. If we really love Him, we must seek and find some more sure proof of it; and this we shall find in that axiom, *Idem velle, idem nolle, ea demum firma est amicitia*, or, in other words, a practical conformity to His holy will is an unmistakable proof that we love God and are loved by Him in return. This is a solid and true love, it is like the love which the blessed in Heaven bear to Him.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us humbly place ourselves in the presence of God our Lord as He is guiding and ruling all things by His Divine providence.

Prelude 2.—Let us entreat the grace that our wills may in all circumstances and events of life be perfectly in harmony with His.

Point 1.—*The great advantages of this conformity.*—

(a) In it consists our real sanctity and perfection; for the most holy will of God is the first and supreme rule of all morality and perfection, and consequently in conforming our will to His in a spirit of respect and love for Him, we are sure to act well and to please Him. It was for this reason that the Blessed Virgin was the holiest of all creatures, because of all mankind she was the most conformed to and ful-

filled the will of God. And our Lord, who was the visible rule of all sanctity and perfection, teaches us this, "To do always what is pleasing unto Him."¹ With this principle He began His life;² it was His food.³

(β) In it we find a firm and unshaken peace of mind and contentment of heart. To seek it in anything else is a folly and a hopeless labour. To seek it in change of place, or of office, or of companions; in pleasure, or honour, or any other worldly thing, is to cut ourselves off from all real peace, as they often cannot be obtained, and if possessed, may be lost at any moment; a stable and firm peace and contentment must be independent of place, time, and employment, and this can be no other than the sweet and holy will of God, and this joy no one can take away from us.⁴

Let us convince ourselves of this great truth, that as self-will is the source in us of all evil, so in the accomplishment of the will of God consists all our true happiness and satisfaction.

Point 2.—The motives of this conformity.—(α) We believe that God is the *Sovereign Good*, and so worthy of our love, that if we had the love of all mankind, and of all the angels in Heaven, we could not love Him adequately. If we esteem and love a person, a word or a hint from them is enough to get anything from us—we feel we *cannot say no* to them; nay, we feel it an honour and a sincere pleasure to cause them any

¹ St. John viii. 29.

² "In the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will: O My God, I have willed it, and Thy law in the midst of My heart." (Psalm xxxix. 8.)

³ "Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work." (St. John iv. 34.)

⁴ "So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John xvi. 22.)

pleasure or happiness, at no matter how great a sacrifice; what should not our feeling and our delight be to make any sacrifice to please our dear Lord? Now this we do whenever we conform our will to His.

(β) Moreover, He is our *Sovereign Lord* and *Master*, and has therefore the right to dispose of us as He pleases; it is His province to command, and His commands are always the best, the wisest, and the most perfect; our duty is simply and blindly to obey, and as servants our will must be absolutely subordinate to His. This is true, and recognized in the relations of man with his fellow-man, how infinitely more true between us and God our Lord. Let us then say, "He is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good in His eyes."¹

(γ) Again, He is our most *loving Father*, and ever exercises a most providential watch and care over us; wherefore we ought to accept His will like dutiful children, not only out of the respect we owe Him, but also out of consideration of our own advantage, knowing well that our Father will in all things procure our solid welfare. The love of earthly parents is often very limited, their providence is blind and very fallible, and consequently they do not always seek the real good of their children, or sometimes even know it, or if they do, have no power to secure it for them. How different is our Heavenly Father in our regard. We are sure that He loves us most tenderly, disposes of us always for our own good and for His greater glory, by His infinite wisdom knows what is best for us, and by His infinite power provides us with the means to attain it, and that, in spite of all the obstacles and difficulties that may present themselves to our short sight. Oh, then, let us throw ourselves without reserve into the arms of God, and cheerfully accept whatever He is

¹ 1 Kings iii. 18.

pleased to send us, knowing that all will turn to our advantage which passes through the hands of such a loving Father. Let us, on the other hand, consider the folly of those who by a political mode of acting, specious pretexts, and scheming, endeavour to compass their private ends, to gain such a post or employment, to get to such and such a place, and imagine thereby to procure their own good, instead of resigning themselves entirely to the Divine will in a spirit of perfect indifference and confidence. Nay, if it were left to us to choose any place or employment, we ought not to accept of the favour, but leave all absolutely in the hands of God and of those whom He has appointed over us. Oh! if we are once for all determined to resign ourselves entirely into the hands of God, we shall find by experience that He will fill us with happiness and peace, and all things will turn to our spiritual welfare, for we are then in the hands of a loving Father who is all wise, all good, and all powerful, who knows our true good, is willing and desirous to promote it, and there is none who can prevent us from attaining it.

Point 3.—The practical exercise of this conformity to God's will.—Let us every morning present ourselves as little children to God, protesting to leave ourselves entirely at His disposal and to accept freely whatever He may please to arrange for the day, submitting in all things to His ever adorable will. Also from time to time let us renew this offering in union with our dear Lord. "Be it so, because you are pleased it should be so." "Thy blessed will be done," especially when any calamity, trouble, or misfortune befalls us. Of what avail is it to get angry, to fret or murmur against those who annoy us? Let us not forget that everything which our Lord permits is intended for our real good, either directly or indirectly, and consequently let us

drink the chalice, for it is mixed and presented to us to drink by our *Father*.

Lastly, let us resolve to practise an exact obedience, and that in a spirit of faith. True sanctity consists in accomplishing the will of God. Now we are never left in doubt as to what is this will, as it is clearly pointed out by our Rules and the orders of Superiors; and in this respect we have an immense advantage over persons in the world, though it will make us less excusable before the Divine tribunal. Let our constant prayer then be *Fiat voluntas tua*, not in a spirit of repugnance or compulsion, but cheerfully, confidingly, and in a spirit of love.

End with "Our Father."

ON PERSEVERANCE.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine our Lord addressing us in those words, "No man putting his hand to the plough," &c.¹

Prelude 2.—Let us implore the grace of holy perseverance.

Point 1.—Whatever is not available for eternity is sheer vanity. Let us reflect that one of the greatest obstacles to perfection is the attachment to the sensible goods of earth, and to our own ease and convenience; and yet we know that they are nothing else but vanity, falsehood, and hollowness. We shall live only a few short years, and we may, by following our own humour and caprice, and indulging our passions, snatch some sorry satisfaction, enjoy a false liberty, and gain a paltry honour and notoriety. But what will all this be

¹ St. Luke ix. 22.

worth at the end? They cannot and do not quiet or satiate the mind and heart at the time, and death will rob us of them at the end: and at that hour what will they appear to us, and how shall we esteem them? One single good action will then give us comfort, and we shall value it—the others will give us pain and cause us loathing, or at least may cause us anxiety.

Let us, then, detach ourselves entirely from all things in this world, and by this we shall secure a powerful means of perseverance.

Point 2.—God is to be our Judge; and if we satisfy Him, we satisfy all. We must tread underfoot all merely human considerations. Sometimes others who are living easy and less fervent lives will turn to ridicule the habits and ways of those who are trying to serve God with great fervour and constancy; but if we take any heed of such railleries, or in consequence relax our efforts to acquire virtue and perfection, we are guilty of cowardice, are afraid of what can neither do us good nor harm, and are guilty of gross folly in exposing ourselves to the judgments of God, who forgets nothing, will judge us justly and without passion, and will pay us well for everything which we have done and suffered for His sake. Therefore, if we content and satisfy Him, we need be under no concern about satisfying anybody else. It is true that, desiring to live piously in Jesus Christ, we shall have to suffer hardships and crosses; some will be loath to converse with us; by others we shall be boycotted; many will take us for unmannerly and narrow-minded, and others will consider us gloomy and morose. But let us have a little patience, till we appear before our Judge, and then it will appear who was in the right, and who in the wrong. Let people say what they please; our cause is in good hands, in those of God, who sooner or later will give every one his due, according to his works.

Whenever, then, we may be tempted to forego our virtuous purposes by human respect, let us remember that we must first study to please and satisfy God, for if He be satisfied, no matter who is dissatisfied.

Point 3.—Thrice happy is he who through life treads the narrow path. Our self-love, and often our friends will suggest the necessity of a certain freedom and liberty, of consulting our ease, inclinations, and genius; but to such suggestions we must turn a deaf ear, for it is certain that the narrow path of strict observance and of no compromise ends always in peace and happiness, although in appearance it seems rugged: and we have the greatest comfort we can enjoy, which is the testimony of a good conscience. To be able to say with truth, We serve God, we serve a good Master who loves us, and whom we love, is real happiness, and makes the approach of death a pleasure.

What a folly it is, then, not to conduct ourselves now in such a way as to secure this happy departure from this wretched world, and the entrance into our everlasting home.

Let us, then, renew all our resolutions, and in a triple colloquy implore the grace to be faithful to them even until death, that so we may secure the reward which is an everlasting crown of glory. End with "Our Father."

CONTEMPLATION FOR OBTAINING DIVINE LOVE.

NOTE.—The object of this exercise is to excite in us a lively love of God ; a love, not of words or feelings merely, but real and effective. For this we cannot be better disposed than after the preceding exercises, which have had for their object to prepare the soul gradually for this union with God, in which our perfection consists. Thus, we were engaged during the first part of the retreat in purging the soul from all the stains of sin, in rooting out all attachment for sin, and all affections which were not approved by the teachings of faith and the dictates of right reason : all of which are quite inconsistent with the love of God our Lord.

When, by God's grace, this had been effected, we were led on to the contemplation of the mysteries of the Life of our Blessed Lord, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and from His teachings and example we learned to follow in His footsteps, to detach ourselves from the world and the things of the world, and to embrace His poverty in spirit and in practice, to mortify ourselves and do violence to all forms of self-love and self-ease, to humble ourselves, and to court humiliations, in a word, to die to ourselves and to the world, that Jesus might live in us. For this, sacrifice is necessary ; and guided by Divine grace, we found in our election what was the special sacrifice which was required from us, that our imitation of our Lord might be perfected, in the state of life to which He has called us.

In the third part, when we contemplated in the mysteries of the terrible Passion of our Lord the sacrifices which His love for us prompted Him to

make, we nerved ourselves to strong and fervent resolutions to be faithful in the fulfilment of that sacrifice which was the subject of our election, and to which the grace of God prompted us.

Finally, in the fourth and last part we drew fresh courage to persevere in holy cheerfulness in the sacrifice of ourselves from the consideration of the reward which our Lord has in store for us: and from seeing how amid all His joys and glory He does not forget us, but loves us still, and will ever prove our friend, encouraging, consoling, strengthening, and aiding us by His words and His example. This necessarily fits us and compels us to love Him in return, and to unite ourselves to Him by the strong ties of love.

St. Ignatius, before entering upon the meditation, lays down two principles: the first of which is that "love is to be estimated by deeds more than by words."

What he says of words applies equally to barren and idle affections and mere sentiment: which is expressed by our Lord when He says: "If you love Me, keep My commandments,"¹ and again by His Apostle, "Let us not love in word or in speech, but in deed and in truth."²

The second principle is that "love consists in the mutual communication of goods between the lover and the person beloved:" so that one gives what he has and is capable of bestowing to the other, as learning, holiness, honour, position, wealth, and the like. It is in this manner that God loves man, it is thus that man should love God. This principle is approved by reason; for love necessarily involves union, and union cannot be conceived without mutual intercommunication.

We will now apply these principles to the subject of our meditation.

¹ St. John xiv. 15.

² St. John iii. 18.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves humbly in the presence of God our Lord, before whom the angels and saints are adoring and interceding for us.¹

Prelude 2.—Let us beg what we have at heart, namely, a deep knowledge of the many great gifts bestowed on us by God, and a profound sense of gratitude, which may make us in everything and in every circumstance of life, love and serve His Divine Majesty.

Point 1.—That God has satisfied the first principle by professing His love for man is clear from innumerable passages in the Sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, in which He declares that He loves souls, that His delight is to be with the children of men, that with an everlasting love He hath loved them, that He hath loved us even so as to give Himself up for us, and the rest. But strong as are His protestations of love and devotedness, they are as nothing when compared with the deeds by which He has manifested the infinite intensity of that love for each of us. Let us ponder with deep feelings the general benefits of His love in the orders of nature, of grace, and of glory, and how much He has imparted to us of those things which He possesses, and how much He also desires to give Himself to us, both here and hereafter.

In *creation* He has made the universe, and has filled it with life vegetative, sensitive, and intellective; He has given to each of us the soul and its powers of memory, understanding, and will; the body with its several senses; and has provided us with environments

¹ Only twice in the Exercises does St. Ignatius propose for a composition of place this solemn and sublime picture of Heaven, which is so well calculated to inspire us with sentiments of awe, courage, confidence, and love. In it we see God, His angels, and the whole array of saints, with her who is the Queen of Saints, all showing their loving goodness and interest in our regard.

in every way favourable for the preservation and development of both the one and the other, and has saved us from the countless bodily and spiritual infirmities which we daily see and witness in others. He has placed us in most favourable relations with inanimate and animate beings, by which we are surrounded, and which minister to our use, or pleasure, or necessities.

To this creation we must add also the gift of conservation, by which, in each moment of existence, all those favours of creation are renewed and made more perfect. Through how many stages have those creatures passed which we use, as in our food and clothing, and how many hands have been preserved and employed in adapting them to our use, for our special benefit, and for our preservation? Oh, what a wonderful providence, what an incomprehensible love on the part of God! for all these things were foreseen and specially provided by the wisdom and goodness of God, and were specially willed by His love for us. In the "Foundation" we meditated on all these creatures under the light of means to our end, to learn the use which we ought to make of them, but now we consider them as so many presents from God, as the pledges of His singular love for us.

If we turn from the natural to the *supernatural* order, there opens such a new world, a boundless ocean of gifts and graces. For us God gave His only and well-beloved Son,¹ Jesus Christ gave His Blood, His Life, His whole self.² The Holy Spirit poured His love into our hearts. God became Man, that we might become God. He imparted to us His doctrine, His merits, and His example, He gave us His Mother to be our own; the life-giving sacraments; and to these we may add those special graces by which every hour of our individual life has been marked.

Lastly, He has prepared for us an eternal weight

¹ St. John iii. 13.

² 1 Timothy ii. 6.

glory, in which we shall possess never-ending happiness and honour and the possession of Himself. The greatness of these gifts is enhanced when we consider who it is that gives them to us, who it is to whom they are given, and for what end they have been bestowed on us. Truly the mind becomes mazy and swims at the countless ways in which God has given Himself to us and continues to spend Himself upon us: *Totus Christus impensus est in nostros usus.*¹

What conclusion should we draw from all this? What ought we to give in return? St. Ignatius tells us: "*Sume*, take, since all is *from* Thee, all belongs to Thee, all is *for* Thee, whatever I have Thou hast given it, and yet it is Thine still. Take, for what is there which I can refuse Thee, and who am I that I should refuse Thee? Take, Thou that knowest well how mean and remiss I am, and how I can offer nothing as I ought. *Sume et suscipe*, yet deign to accept, O Lord, for in Thy goodness and royal generosity Thou art pleased to accept as a gift from me that which is Thine already—*universam meam libertatem*—all my liberty, which includes my whole self; accept me as Thy poor and unworthy bonds slave, who has no claims, no rights of his own, but is absolutely and in all things dependent on his Master's good pleasure: *sume et suscipe*, my memory, my understanding, and my will. I consent to be deprived of these my faculties if Thou judgest it in any way useful to Thy glory, and thus for me to be reduced to the state of the animal creation—*quibus non est intellectus*.

"Whatever I have is Thy free gift, Thou alone art the sovereign Lord and absolute Master of my soul and body, and of all my environments, whether in reality or in prospect; and to Thee, by the power which Thou hast granted me, I freely give them back

¹ St. Augustine.

again. *Dispone*, do Thou vouchsafe to dispose of them according to Thy good pleasure, without any regard to me or to my will."

"My only wish and desire, the one thing I humbly crave, is *amorem tui solum et gratiam*, the grace to love Thee and to love only Thee, and then I shall be rich enough. This is my only wish, and beyond that I ask for nothing more; and this I humbly crave inasmuch and as far as Thou dost will it."

This is the most perfect offering and the sublimest act of love which we can make, whether we consider *what* we give, the *manner* in which we give it, that is, without any reserve at all for self, or the *motive* for which it is given, namely, out of the purest love. If made from the heart and in real earnest, in what a happy condition does this place us! Who can tell the graces which will follow from it, though in the act we do not consider these graces or our self-interest in any way? From how many miseries, fears, anxieties, desires, which spring from self-love, will it deliver us!

Point 2.—When an earthly monarch wishes to make a present to his subject, he has it taken to him; and when once it has been delivered, he takes no further trouble about it; but it is not thus that God treats us. He gives His gifts to us in Person—He actually abides in them, and is constantly renewing these benefits, both in the order of nature and of grace.

The presence of God in all His favours to us increases the value of them immeasurably. He is present in them by His essence, by His power, and in the just by His grace. In the vegetable order He is giving life; in the animal creation, life and feeling; in man, life, feeling, and understanding. He is present to keep them from falling back into the nothing from which He has extracted them, for otherwise they would

instantly be annihilated; He is present to enable them to act, and concurs in the effects of their every action; in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

In the order of grace He is present in the Eucharist, in which He continues the works of His mortal life, and His Incarnation is expanded and brought home to each of us. He is present in our souls, adorning them ever with fresh beauty. With what feelings of love and gratitude should our souls be inflamed, and with what generosity should we offer ourselves to God; and with what respect should we make use of all things in order not to employ them against the will of Him who dwells in them.

Here let us, with all the earnestness of our souls, renew the offering which we made at the end of the first point.

Point 3.—Let us further ponder how in all creatures God is working and labouring, so to speak, for our individual sakes, whether in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, animals, &c., concurring with them immediately or mediately: in the sun and the heavenly bodies, in the clouds, in the air, the waters, in the growth of plants, ripening of fruits, propagation and development of animals, &c., in the feeding, circulation, digestion of our bodies, in providing us with clothing and dwellings. So, too, in the order of grace. So, too, He concurs with each of us in our works. This thought should incite us to avail ourselves of His concurrence *solely* for His glory, and not for self-love or for the gratification of our passions.

Point 4.—Let us consider how all good gifts descend from above, and how God is the principle of everything which exists, and how in Him are contained in an eminent degree all those perfections which we find existing in creatures. Thus the varied forms of beauty

¹ Acts xvii. 28.

in nature are but faint reflections of the infinite beauty of the Divinity; the vast expanse of the heavens and of the ocean are merely the dim shadows of the immensity of God; the science, skill, and other intellectual qualities, together with the moral attributes of mankind, are but tiny representations of Him who is the Infinite and thrice Holy. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights,"¹ just as rays from the sun, or the stream from its source.

The world is like a book written by the finger of God, and the creatures that are in the world are, as it were, the letters by which the perfections of its Author are faintly and imperfectly described. We should then regard all things as reminders to us of God. They each have a tongue telling us of His glory, they each have a finger pointing up towards their Author, and thus they furnish a means by which we may ascend up to Him. What fools we are then to attach ourselves to creatures for themselves and for their own sake, and thus pervert them from the end for which they were created, and, instead of employing them to lead us to God, make use of them actually to withdraw us and alienate us from Him.

Let us repent for our past folly in this respect, and let us again make the offering, *Sume Domine et suscipe*. Let us also beg of our ever-Blessed Mother and of the saints, especially of our Society, and of the angels, to intercede for us that we may never again be guilty of rapine in the holocaust which we have made of ourselves to God our Lord.

¹ St. James i. 17.

RULES OF ORTHODOXY.

These rules were drawn up by St. Ignatius with the object of guarding the true children of the Church from the errors of the self-styled Reformers of the sixteenth century, and of protecting them from the pernicious influence of those innovators who denounced not only the dogmas of the Church, but also her ritual, her ceremonies, and her holy practices. But they are as applicable to and as useful for those who are living now at the close of the nineteenth century, as they were at the time at which they were written. For though the phases of Protestantism have been constantly undergoing transformation, still the spirit remains the same: the same rejection of divinely constituted authority, the same upholding of the principle of private judgment, and the same substitution of reason in place of supernatural and Divine faith. The influence of Protestantism, whether we consider it politically, socially, or on the individual, has been far reaching and disastrous, in consequence of its flattering the passions, promoting the spirit of pride and independence, and sanctioning self-ease and material comforts; wherefore we cannot be surprised that under all its forms and at all times it displays an inveterate hatred and antagonism to the Church of Christ, whose office it is to teach and maintain the principles of its Founder, the doctrine of the Cross and of mortification, the necessity of humility and submission to the authority which He has constituted, and which is incarnated in His Vicar. Now, as in the early days of Protestantism, the children of the Catholic Church are exposed to no small danger of being tainted by the false maxims of a religion which permits and fosters the cravings of poor human nature,

and it is to counteract this danger that these rules are recommended to us, not as comprising a summary of dogmatic truth, but as summarizing the true Catholic spirit, which, alas ! owing to the Protestant atmosphere which we are condemned to breathe, seems to be on the wane ; and it is this spirit which it is our duty to manifest and to promote by boldly upholding these main features of a truly Christian life, so violently denounced by Luther and his followers.

Rule 1.—Laying aside our own private judgment, we must have a mind prompt and ready to obey in all things our holy Mother the hierarchical Church, which is the true spouse of Christ our Lord, and which is the Roman Church.

Our Lord chose it for His immaculate and eternal spouse, gave to it His Spirit, and promised to be with it all days, to support and preserve it. Whoever, then, opposes the Church is an enemy of Christ, and must be regarded as a “heathen and a publican,” seeing that he opposes that which is “the pillar and the firmament of truth,” “against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail.”

Rule 2.—We must approve and commend auricular confession and the reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament at least once a year : much more every month, and better still every eighth day, provided it be done under due and required conditions. As regards this rule, we may learn what is the spirit of the Church from the Council of Trent, which declares that “Jesus Christ wished this Sacrament to be taken as the Food of our souls, thereby to be nourished and strengthened by the Life of Him who said, ‘He that eateth Me shall live by Me,’ and to have an antidote by which we may be set free from our daily faults and may be preserved from mortal sin.”

Or, as St. Ambrose puts it: "I should always receive that my sins may be forgiven, and as I am always sinning, I should always have my medicine."

Further, the Tridentine Fathers add: "This holy Synod would wish that at every Mass the faithful who assist should communicate not only spiritually, but also sacramentally."¹

Innocent XI. decreed that "frequent Communion was to be left to the judgment of confessors, who, guided by the purity of conscience, the fruits, and progress of their penitents in piety, were to decide what would best promote their salvation, in their several states of life."

The same Pope admonishes pastors having care of souls "not to debar the faithful from frequent or even daily Communion."

St. Charles Borromeo prescribes that his clergy shall exhort the faithful *quam frequentissime*—"to frequent Communion," and threatens any priest or preacher who shall either directly or indirectly advise the contrary, with suspension."

Alexander VII. condemns the proposition, "Those are to be excluded from Holy Communion, in whom there is not most pure love of God, free from all imperfection."

St. Basil says: "It is good and most useful to communicate daily, and to partake of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ."

St. Ambrose: "If It is daily Bread, why do you only take It once a year? Take daily what is of daily advantage, and live so that you may be daily worthy to receive."

¹ From this it would appear that it would be well if the piety and devotion of the faithful were such that, whenever the Holy Sacrifice is offered, some one of those present at Mass were to approach the altar and receive Holy Communion.

Rule 3.—We must approve and commend the frequent hearing of Mass; also the keeping of choir, and protracted prayer as well in church as at home; and also the recitation of the Divine Office and the Canonical Hours at the appointed times.

Rule 4.—We must approve and hold in high esteem the several Religious Orders, the states of virginity and continency, and commend, but not so highly, the matrimonial state. This is clearly to counteract the effect of the doctrine and example of the Reformers.

Rule 5.—We must approve the taking of religious vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and of other pious practices of supererogation. And here it is to be observed that as a vow appertains only to such things as regard Evangelical perfection, it cannot be taken about those things which do not appertain thereto, such as matrimony, trading, and the like.

Rule 6.—We must approve of the relics of the saints, and show reverence to them, and also must pray to those whose relics they are; we must, moreover, uphold stations, pilgrimages, Indulgences, Jubilees, and the use of lighted candles in the church, all of which were denounced and ridiculed by the self-styled Reformers.

Rule 7.—We must approve the commandments of the Church regarding fasting and abstinence, such as the laws of Lent, of the Ember-days, certain vigils, and of the Fridays throughout the year; likewise the teaching and practices of internal and exterior penance.

Rule 8.—We must approve of the building and decoration of churches, also of the making of images, and must venerate them for what they represent.

The preceding rules are calculated to promote in us a high idea and a great fervour in the practice of works of piety and exercises of devotion, approved by and practised in the Church; and we must be convinced that they will produce great fruit in all who adopt

them, and will serve to preserve and propagate the faith, besides securing the rewards attached to them respectively. If we conscientiously observe them, our lives become a constant and living protest against the heretics of our day, and also serve as a reproach to those liberal Catholics who have imbibed the spirit of the times and are inclined to make light of such things, even though closely allied to the spirit of the Church and consecrated by venerable antiquity, and also approved by the practice and teaching of the saints.

Rule 9.—We must accept and approve all the precepts of the Church, and be ever ready to vindicate and defend them, and carefully avoid impugning or condemning them.

Rule 10.—We must be always more ready to approve and praise than to find fault with the statutes and recommendations as well as the customs of Superiors and of those who have gone before us; for even though sometimes they may have been hardly praiseworthy, still to denounce them from the pulpit, or before the common people, would give scandal and would do no good, but might excite discontent and anger against former rulers, whether in the temporal or spiritual order. It may, however, be useful to speak of such to those who may have it in their power to remedy any such things as are blameworthy in Superiors, or are calculated to give scandal to others.

St. Cyprian, speaking of his own times, says that heresies and schisms are the outcome of disobedience, murmurings, and contempt on the part of subjects in regard of their ecclesiastical Superiors, and that he who maintains inviolable the authority of prelates, extirpates by the roots all errors. It is the spirit of ignoring the ordinations of Superiors, of canvassing their conduct, and disregarding their opinions, that leads men to set up their own judgments in opposition,

and at length to fall. This was the case with Luther and with all the first self-styled Reformers.

Rule 11.—We must approve of the Positive and Scholastic methods of teaching theology: in the first we are taught, and our affections are excited in all things to love God our Lord, and to give ourselves up to His service, as in the writings of St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest of the Fathers; in the second, as in the works of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and the Master of Sentences, we learn to define accurately and to establish those truths which are necessary for eternal salvation, and are better prepared to show up and refute all the errors and false reasonings of the day; and this because the Scholastics are of more recent date and are excellently versed in the true interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures and in the writings of the holy Fathers, and at the same time are specially enlightened and guided by God, and are helped by the decrees of the Councils and by the canons and constitutions of our holy mother the Church. From this rule we see clearly the cause of the inveterate hostility of the new teachers and their successors to Scholastic Theology.

Rule 12.—We must be careful in making comparisons between persons at present alive and the saints, such for example as, "Such a one is more learned than was St. Augustine, so-and-so is a greater saint than St. Francis, and the like."

Rule 13.—That we may avoid all error we must be always ready to maintain that what to us seems white is black if the Church so declares, believing that between Christ our Lord and His spouse the Holy Catholic Church there is one and the same spirit which guides and governs us for the salvation of our souls: for our holy mother the Church is ruled and governed by the same spirit as our Lord who gave to us the Ten

Commandments, and consequently is infallible in all those things which pertain to matters of faith or morals.

Rule 14.—Though it is most true that no one can be saved unless he be predestined and have faith and grace, yet on such subjects great care must be taken in speaking on or discussing them.

This is most necessary, lest in over-estimating the efficacy of predestination and grace we unduly detract from the power and efforts of free-will, or lest by allowing too much to free-will we derogate from the grace of God, without which all supernatural acts would be impossible.

Rule 15.—We must not habitually preach on predestination; and when we happen to treat on it, let it be done so that the common people may not be led into any mistake and should be inclined to say: "It is already decreed whether I am to be lost or saved, and whether I perform works good or bad, it cannot be otherwise;" and thus tepid and indifferent people neglect those works which conduce to salvation and to their spiritual advancement.

Rule 16.—Great care must be taken lest by unduly speaking of and extolling the virtue of faith, without the addition of those distinctions and explanations which the subject requires, we furnish a pretext to those who hear us for neglecting certain good works which either precede or are the consequences of a faith informed by Divine love.

The Council of Trent,¹ interpreting the words of St. Paul² that men are justified *gratis* by faith, says that the perpetual teaching of the Catholic Church is that "therefore, we are said to be justified by faith, inasmuch as faith is the beginning of salvation, the

¹ Sess. vi. c. 8.

² Romans iii. 28; Galat. ii. 16; Ephes. ii. 8.

foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and be numbered among His children. We are said to be justified *gratis*, because none of these things which precede justification, such as faith or good works, can merit it." Later, in the eleventh chapter of the same session, after establishing the necessity of good works, it adds, "Let no one then delude himself by supposing that by faith *alone* he becomes heir of God and secures his inheritance."

Rule 17.—Likewise, we must not so speak of grace as to seem to detract from man's liberty; nor in these dangerous times must we speak of faith and of grace to the detriment of good works and free-will, or so as to render them of no account.

The Council of Trent declares: "The beginning of justification in adults is derived from God through Jesus Christ by preventing grace, that is, by his vocation by which they are called, without any existing merit of their own, so that though turned away from God by sin, they are disposed, by His grace awakening and helping them, to turn to their justification, by their free assent and co-operation with that grace. So that when God by His illuminations touches man's soul, man also acts by accepting it when he could have rejected it, not however that he could of his own free-will and without the grace of God move himself to justification. And therefore we read in Scripture, Be converted unto Me and I will be converted to you, whereby, we are reminded of our liberty; and again we are taught the preventing grace of God in those other words: Convert us, O Lord, unto Thee and we shall be converted."

Rule 18.—Although the service of God solely out of pure love, is to be esteemed above all things, still we must approve and esteem also fear of His Divine Majesty: for not only is filial fear pious and most holy, but servile fear also, when man cannot rise to any-

thing better or more profitable. For even this helps much to free oneself from mortal sin, and when once this has been done, a man easily attains to filial fear, which is entirely acceptable and pleasing to God our Lord, because it is inseparably united with love.

In the Scriptures we have innumerable passages in praise of the fear of God. Thus,¹ "The fear of the Lord driveth out sin. For he that is without fear cannot be justified." Again, it is said to "confer peace and the fruits of salvation, dilates the heart and brings joy and gladness."² It is the "beginning of wisdom," and "the crown and fulness of wisdom." It is for this which holy David prays, "Pierce my flesh with Thy fear." Our Lord Himself counsels it, *Timeo eum qui potest et animam et corpus perdere in gehennam.*

According then to these rules we may form a judgment, how far we are influenced in our judgments and in our conduct by the true Christian and Catholic spirit, which is one grand result of the Spiritual Exercises when properly made.

We may test our spirit of *faith* and *obedience* to the Church by the first, ninth, and thirteenth rules. We may further judge what effects they produce upon our conduct by the manner in which we are present at the *rites* and *ceremonies* of Holy Church and make use of the *sacraments*, according to the second, third, and eighth rules; we may test our *conformity* to her discipline, and to her sentiments with regard to *Religious Orders* by the seventh, fourth, and fifth rules, our submission to civil authorities by the tenth rule, our appreciation of her methods of teaching by the eleventh rule, also our orthodoxy in regard of predestination, grace, faith, and good works, and also as concerns the utility of filial fear of God by the rules from fourteen to eighteen.

¹ Eccles. i. 27, 28.

² Eccles. i. 12.

In compiling these rules, St. Ignatius evidently had in view the detractors of Holy Church, such as Luther, Calvin, and Jansenius, and their public errors; and wished to make them known so that the children of the Church might shun them and escape being misled by them.

APPENDIX I.

**SUBJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION WHICH MAY FURNISH
MATTER FOR ELECTION AND REFORMATION OF OUR
STATE OF LIFE, USEFUL FOR ALL.**

In the following Appendices, various considerations are proposed, which suggest subjects which will be found useful and suited for our election and the reformation of our lives. They are not to be taken successively, but now we may select one, now another, according to the necessity or requirements of the time. For, as when a man is sick it would be inexpedient to drug him with all kinds of medicine, and we must only administer such as are calculated to restore him to health, so according to the different states of the soul must be the nature of our resolutions and the subject-matter of our election.

1. Not unfrequently during the course of the afternoon, in place of a regular meditation, which might be inconvenient and a source of great fatigue, there is substituted what is called a consideration on some practical subject bearing on our daily life and duties. This custom has two great advantages, for in the first place it helps us to a more intimate knowledge of ourselves, and in the second it provides us with a number of subjects on which we may exercise the methods of election, to our great spiritual profit.

2. The subjects ought to be of a practical nature, and should be adapted consequently to the state of life of him who is making the Exercises.

3. They should be chosen and determined by him who gives the Exercises, who will be able to judge which will be the most useful and the best suited to the state and dispositions of the exercitant under his charge.

I.—ON HUMILITY.

Humility is a virtue which prompts a man to take a true estimate of himself, and laudably to depreciate himself,¹ or as St. Bernard describes it: "It is a virtue which causes a man to think lightly of himself, and to acknowledge it in his words and conduct."²

I. This virtue is based upon the clear knowledge which man has of himself, of his dependence, and of his defects. This knowledge influences the will, thereby inclining it to regulate its action in conformity with the real appreciation of self. It is, moreover, a virtue strongly inculcated by God, and approved by right reason. Thus our Lord bids us to "learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart."³ St. James counsels us to "be humbled in the sight of God, and He will exalt us."⁴ Further, a glorious sanction is attached to the practice of this virtue; for it is written, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."⁵

The whole life of our Blessed Lord, from His Incarnation to His Death upon the Cross, must convince us of the beauty, excellence, and necessity of this virtue, and shows how dear it was to His Sacred Heart. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross."⁶

¹ *Sum. i. q. 161. a. 1.*

² *De grad. hum.*

³ *St. Matt. xi. 29.*

⁴ *St. James iv. 10.*

⁵ *St. Luke xiv. 11.*

⁶ *Philipp. ii. 8.*

How consistent with reason this virtue is, even if revelation were silent on the subject, is clear. For reason teaches us that of ourselves we have nothing; that whatever qualities we enjoy, whether in the intellectual, moral, or physical orders, whatever we possess in the order of nature or of grace, all are derived either immediately or mediately from God,¹ on whom and on whom alone, we are absolutely dependent. In Him we live, move, and have our very being: without Him we are so helpless, that we cannot even think a good thought. The practical recognition of this our absolute dependence is most pleasing to God our Lord, who is the Spirit of Truth; and therefore is it that we find all good things and blessings promised to those who are truly humble, whilst the proud are pronounced to be an abomination to the Lord, and are threatened with the anger and vengeance of God.

II. There are various ways or degrees in which this virtue may be reduced to practice, laid down by Lessius.²

1. To hold oneself in small esteem as to all those qualities or accomplishments, which by one's own efforts he may have acquired.

2. To recognize oneself unworthy of all the gifts that God has bestowed upon him; this is most strictly true as far as man himself is concerned.

3. From this it must follow that in all truth and honesty, man must suppress all desires of esteem, praise or honour, knowing well, that all credit is due not to him, but to God, who of His own free-will has given to him all that he is, or that he in any way may

¹ "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.)

² *De Just. et Jurr.* iv. c. 3.

be said to possess. Just as in a statue or painting, no credit is due to the work of art itself, but all its beauty, excellence, and celebrity are to be attributed to the artist who has designed and executed it.

4. From an honest desire to be judged and estimated according to his true worth, and as he is in the sight of God, the humble man wishes to be held of little account, as far as he himself is concerned: hence as St. Bernard says: "The man who is really humble does not wish himself to be proclaimed humble, but to be reputed as nothing worth."¹

5. The humble man will feel pained instead of being flattered when he finds himself treated with consideration, or hears himself or his actions praised or extolled, unless it redounds to the honour and glory of God.

6. If he institutes any comparison between himself and others, he will always give the preference to them; for, reflecting on what he is of *himself*, and what others are by the *gifts* which *God* has *conferred* upon them, he can with all truthfulness regard himself as more despicable and worse than all others.²

The humble man sees and acknowledges his own weakness and miseries, whilst he shuts his eyes to the good qualities and gifts which God has bestowed on him; whereas he sees and recognizes the benefits conferred on others, refusing to let his mind dwell on their shortcomings or defects.

7. Finally, he submits himself in all things to the holy will and disposal of God in all things, as clay in the hands of the potter, and cheerfully submits to be governed by others, for God's sake, and as His rightly constituted ministers, as far as his station, position, and the laws of prudence and propriety permit.

¹ Serm. in Cant. xxv. § 10.

² Sum. 2^a 2^a, q. clxi. a. 3.

III. The vices opposed to this virtue of Humility.

1. Undue and unreasonable self-depreciation is opposed to true humility, and is a violation of sincerity or truth. By it we expose office, position, or station to detriment or injury; nor does it in any way tend to the benefit of others, or to the edification of our neighbour. It is often a great delusion, or the effect of a secret and subtle pride or self-consciousness, to speak disparagingly of self: hence it is far better to adopt the golden rule, namely, to avoid the use of the first personal pronoun as much as possible, as well in public as in private.

2. The second vice opposed to humility is pride, or the inordinate appreciation of our own imagined excellence or superiority. This arises from the undue consideration of our own gifts and advantages, without assigning them to God, from whom we have derived them; as also from our blinding ourselves to our many weaknesses, imperfections, or defects. From these causes we are led to attribute to ourselves greater excellence or merit than we really possess, to judge ourselves better than we are, and therefore to take complacency in ourselves, to the disparagement of others. Hence, too, arise inordinate desires of praise, of notice, of deference and subservience; hence, too, feelings of disappointment, grief, irritation, and resentment, when these desires are not gratified; hence, also, contempt for others, preference of self to others, even to those in authority, and condemnation of others for want of prudence, judgment, charity, &c., if in anything they think or act differently from ourselves. Hence, too, that extreme sensitiveness when any fault is found with us, or charitable suggestion is made to us for our greater temporal or spiritual good.

3. Although it is less criminal and less contemptible than pride, another vice is equally opposed to the

virtue of humility. This vice is the foolish appreciation of our attainments, whether physical, intellectual, or moral, and a morbid craving of ostentation and display, which betray a want of judgment. It is at once a grave cause of disedification, and exposes us to the pity or contempt of others, and sooner or later is punished by God with bitter humiliation. Let us examine ourselves seriously on these points, and see how far we have failed in regard of this virtue, and what practical steps we are to take to correct our faults.

End with "Our Father."

2.—THE FUTURE LIFE.

What a strange thing it is that knowing, as every man does, that he is here on earth merely for a few short years, that he enjoys at most only the beginning of an existence, amidst scenes of ever-recurring death; knowing, too, by infallible revelation and by the dictates of reason that his soul once having been created can never cease to be, but must go on in the fulness of life as long as God is God, yet he allows himself to be so engrossed by the passing things of time, as though there were no future life awaiting him. That there is another life is certain, a life that shall never end, the nature of which, whether for weal or woe, he must determine: for he has the awful power to decide whether he will be eternally happy in the possession of God and in the company of the angels and saints in Heaven, or eternally miserable with the damned in Hell. To impress this truth more deeply upon us let us consider the following points.

Point 1.—There is "another life" towards which I am hurrying forward. Every evening I am twenty-four

hours nearer to it than on the previous day. Even whilst I am asleep, I am still moving rapidly onward towards it, never halting on the way! Oh! what a comfort, what a source of courage and consolation to one that is earnest in the service of God. Listen to the holy man Job, covered with loathsome ulcers and seated on a dunghill: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again in my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom."¹ And St. Paul: "As to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day."² And again: "The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the weight of future glory."³ It was the faith in another life that prompted the Apostles to abandon houses, lands, and kindred, and with joy to welcome sufferings and death itself, in order to purchase eternal delights. It was the anticipation of another life that caused the martyrs to brave the rage of tyrants and the tortures of their executioners; that peopled the deserts with solitaries, who in penance, fasting, and prayer, passed their days, happy in the expectation of the eternal years. It has filled monasteries with holy virgins of both sexes, and has incited confessors to wander through the whole world, to brave every danger, and to endure cheerfully every kind of hardship.

Point 2.—There is "another life," an eternal one. How short and transitory and uncertain are the years of man! "Man born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state: the days of man are short, and the number of his months is with

¹ Job xix. 25, 26.

² 2 Timothy iv. 8.

³ Romans viii. 18.

Thee."¹ Here there is no stability but incessant change, no peace but constant unrest, no repose but a never-ending alternation of cares, anxieties, hopes, and fears. Then, again, how very uncertain! The Author of life tells us that He will call us away when we least expect it, and daily experience convinces us that there is nothing more uncertain than the hour of death. But it is far otherwise with that other life, which will never end. Here sorrows and pain, cares and disappointments quickly pass, and joys and pleasures are no less fleeting. Not so in the other life, where nothing passes away, where all is stable and unchangeable, where what is possessed is "fulness of life² without possibility of change, of increase or diminution;" where the soul will enjoy perfect happiness which can never be lost, or will be plunged into the abyss of despair and anguish from which it can never be released. What a terrible alternative! what a fearful contrast! This thought of eternity is pregnant with delightful consequences for those who have lived lives of the just on earth. They have done wisely in repressing their passions, in flying from sin or the occasions which exposed them to danger, in doing works of penance, in observing the commandments of God. They detached themselves from the things of time, they spent their lives in sacrifices for God and their neighbour, they followed in the footsteps of Christ, in view of this eternal life: and how wisely!

Let us, like the just who have gone before us, let us fear nothing but to offend God our Lord, let us detach ourselves from all that is not God, let us keep our mind fixed on this other life, "having in our minds the eternal years," desiring nothing but to dwell for ever with Christ in never-ending bliss and glory.

¹ Job xiv. 1-5.

² "Tota simul et plena vita." (Boethius.)

Point 3.—There is “another life.” What an overwhelming thought to the sinner! When for him the brief space of life is drawing to its close, what bitter memories must force themselves upon him! “I did but taste a little honey, with the end of the rod, and behold I must die.”¹ Life has been wasted in the search after fleeting and hollow pleasures, in the study of ease and comfort, in sacrifice of conscience for earthly gain, in the indulgence of unlawful cravings, in the gratification of unbridled passions. The sinner has lived for self and not for God, for the esteem or praise of men, for the bubble of worldly glory, for the acquisition of worldly wealth: and now he sees all these gradually receding from him; and as his mortal life is drawing to a close, “another life” is opening out before him. Tarry he cannot, he must go forward; eternity is preparing to swallow him up. He has been gliding thoughtlessly over the surface of life, without ever attempting to fathom its depth; he has spent his days in a dream, and he wakes from his sleep to find his hands empty. He has been pursuing shadows instead of contemplating the great unseen realities of life, until too late he finds himself undeceived. Oh! what must be the bitterness of his regrets. How clearly now does he see his folly when it is too late to exchange it for real wisdom.

If we have, then, any sense at all, we shall direct our thoughts, desires, and efforts to this future life; we shall spare no pains, deem no sacrifices too great to secure its being happy. Let us, with Asaph the Psalmist, be able to say: “I thought upon the days of my youth; and I had in my mind the eternal years. And I meditated in the night with my own heart, and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit.”²

¹ “Gustavi paululum mellis et ecce morior.” (1 Kings xiv. 43.)

² Psalm lxxvi. 6, 7.

In each moment of life here below, it is a question for each one of us of a loss or a gain for eternity.

This living faith in "another life" is the great motor of sanctity. What is our faith in this point? What influence has it exercised upon us in our appreciation of the things of this world? What effect has it had on the guiding or regulating of our desires, on the manner and intention with which we perform the everyday duties of our state of life. Do we think and will and act as becomes one who is hurrying onwards to his eternity, or rather as one who is a mere creature of time? Whilst yet we have the opportunity, let us resolve to correct what is wanting, that when the Lord may please to call us, He may find us ready to respond to His call.

3.—ON TRIALS.

There is no truth more clearly declared in the Sacred Scriptures, or more confirmed by experience, than that our life, as long as we are here below, is marked by trials. No matter what may be our age, or calling, or social position, it is always true, our days are few in number, but are filled up with many miseries: miseries from without or from within, miseries from ourselves or from others, from our fellow-men or from the enemy of our human nature. "Truly it is a misery to live on earth;"¹ and again, "The Cross is always ready and at every turn awaits you. Run where you please, you cannot shun it."²

Yes! trials are necessary; but they are often useful, and at all times can be turned to great profit and to our spiritual advantage, if we only employ the means with which God provides us.

¹ à Kempis, i. c. 22.

² à Kempis, ii. c. 13.

Point 1.—"Because thou wast acceptable unto God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee."¹ So spoke the Archangel to Tobias, when he announced to him that he had been sent by God to heal him, and to deliver Sara from the devil.

Again God declares by the mouth of Job, "Blessed is the man whom God correcteth; refuse not, therefore, the chastising of the Lord. For He woundeth and He cureth, He striketh and His hand shall heal."² The same truth is insisted upon by St. James: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life."³

We read that trials and temptations await all those who enter in earnest into the service of God:⁴ that far from being a mark of God's displeasure, they should be regarded rather as a sign of His approbation and goodwill in our regard,⁵ and that they are a special sign of His blessing and love.⁶

From the above and from many other passages, we see that trials and temptations are the portion of the just, that they are a source of blessings, a pledge of God's watchful care and spiritual love.

How true this is will appear more manifest if we look at the lives of all the servants of God, from the Apostles down to our own time: it is verified in those who have proved their fidelity by laying down their lives for Christ, or who have made life a lingering martyrdom by lifelong sacrifices of penance, prayer, and patience, or who in the spirit of confessors, have welcomed trials and temptations, and have overcome all difficulties in the promotion of the knowledge and love of God in their own souls or in the souls of others.

If we consult reason itself, enlightened by Divine faith, the necessity of temptations and trials is con-

¹ Job xii. 13.² Job v. 17.³ St. James i. 12.⁴ Ecclus. ii. 1.⁵ Job xii. 13.⁶ Hebrews xii. 5.

firmed. For the devil, the enemy of human nature, and the world which is opposed to Christ our Lord, necessarily hate all those who strive to follow in His footsteps, and who are consequently opposed to them, who reject their false allurements, and condemn and denounce their pernicious principles.

Point 2.—But why does God permit His servants to be tried by temptation? 1. Because in this way He makes a trial of their virtue. “As silver is tried by fire, and gold in the furnace, so doth the Lord try the heart;”¹ and again, “The furnace trieth the potter’s vessel, and the trials of affliction just men.”²

Therefore holy David prayed to the Lord, “Prove me, O God, and know my heart, examine me and know my paths.”³

2. God allows them to be tempted that He may give them true humility, which renders them mistrustful and diffident of their own selves, whilst at the same time it leads them closer to our Lord, and causes them to repose their confidence in His protection. For in the hour of trial and temptation, we see clearly our own weakness and helplessness if left to ourselves, and thus are compelled to have recourse to God in prayer. Happy would it have been for St. Peter if he had followed the counsel of Jesus, instead of presuming on his own strength. “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

3. Another reason why God permits His servants to be tempted, is in order that by His grace they may increase their merits here and their glory hereafter.

We must not suppose that we are making great progress in virtue when all goes on smoothly. This state is often most dangerous, as it is calculated to make us negligent in God’s service, and to foster vanity

¹ Prov. xvii. 3.

² Eccus. xxvii. 6.

³ Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

or self-complacency, to become remiss in prayer, and in all spiritual exercises ; to grow indifferent in avoiding the occasions of sin, and in this way to expose ourselves to the attacks of our enemy who never sleeps, but " like a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour."¹

Point 3.—What are the means to be employed to overcome. The first class of trials and temptations, is when we find ourselves in a state of universal apathy, darkness, insensibility, and heaviness of soul. At such times, meditation, prayer, penance, detachment, all become irksome and difficult. We feel a loathing for all things supernatural. Faith seems darkened, hope seems undermined, charity grown cold. Like one groping to find his way in the dark, we know not how, or rather feel unable to take a step forward. This is often a great trial to earnest and anxious souls, to whom it seems as if God had turned away His face from them, as if all their past labours, sacrifices, and endeavours had been in vain, as if further perseverance were impossible. With our Lord they are filled with feelings of loathing and weariness, *capit ledere*.

In such occasions, we must persist in striving to detach ourselves still more perfectly from creatures, towards which at such times the devil and our own wayward nature would incline us to turn ourselves in search of comfort and consolation. We must, in the next place, humble ourselves, recognizing that of ourselves we are nothing, can do nothing, and that all our sufficiency must come from Him who " is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will make also with temptation issue that we may be able to bear it."²

It is at such times, also, that we must be brave and give ourselves to extra exercises of self-abnegation and

¹ 1 St. Peter v. 8.

² 1 Cor. x. 13.

prayer, thereby to move the Heart of our Lord to compassion; we must make, also, fervent acts of confidence in His loving protection: "Even though He should kill me, yet will I hope in Him."¹ "If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear: if a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident."²

Another excellent practice, is to go in spirit to the Garden of Gethsemane, there to keep company with our dear Lord, who when full of loathing (*cœpit tædere*), and sadness (*mæstus esse*), and fear (*pavere*), being in a very agony, prayed the longer. Persevere from day to day: perhaps to-morrow the clouds will be dispersed, and then will come the bright sunshine.

The second class of trials is composed of those against faith and purity. These may be either of short duration or may be persistent. If the former, they should be treated with cool contempt, whilst the mind is diverted to something else and the heart raised up to our Lord or our Blessed Mother. If the latter, we should with perfect calmness, humble ourselves profoundly, place ourselves at the feet of Jesus, or with Mary at the foot of the Cross.

With patience, confidence, and humility, we must have recourse to prayer, knowing that our prayer will be heard. Let us also be careful not to perturb ourselves by any undue self-examination which encourages such temptations, increasing them in number and intensity. Let us beware of "perhaps" and "ifs;" when with God's grace we feel that we have good-will, and take ordinary pains to fulfil our duties, especially those of prayer, and avoid exposing ourselves knowingly to the occasions of such temptations, and are moreover troubled lest perhaps we may have yielded, let us go in peace and confidence, trusting by

¹ Job xiii. 15.

² Psalm xxvi. 3.

God's mercy that there has been no sin. A third class of trials comprises those against charity.

Sometimes we feel a strong tendency to sit in judgment on others, to misinterpret their actions, to take an unfavourable view of all they say or do, even in things most innocent, and if we cannot condemn their deeds, to impute to them less perfect motives or intentions. Sometimes we are tempted to postpone them to ourselves, or to forego the duties of charity, rather than sacrifice our love of self in some form or other; we feel a repugnance to help them, or to sympathize with them in their sorrows or afflictions, or to rejoice with them in their success or good fortune; it may be that we are tempted to entertain aversion for them, to despise them, or to treat them with disdain or contempt, or what is sometimes worse, to ignore them.

All this may arise from pride, or self-complacency, or at times from a morbid state of mind or imagination: or, again, it may be that their manners, disposition, or conduct but ill accord with our own ideas; or, perhaps, they may be really disagreeable and faulty. In any case, we have no excuse for yielding, but should remember, (1) who *we* are who would sit in judgment upon others. Let us take the *beam* out of our own eye, before we look at the *mote* in the eye of our brother. (2) Who is our neighbour? A brother of Jesus, for whom Jesus died, and whom Jesus loves with all his faults, and whom Jesus commands us to love. He is *our* brother too: a member of the same mystical body: destined later to live, and reign, and be happy with us in our Eternal Home. Jesus, also, has substituted him in place of Himself as the object of our love. (3) Let us also remember that we should do to others as we wish them to do to us, and let us shut one eye to the faults of others, whilst keeping the other wide open to

see their good qualities, which are always far more numerous.

Let us examine ourselves on all these points. How far are we practically convinced of the necessity of suffering? Have we tried to turn our trials, sufferings, and temptations to advantage? How have we employed the means of overcoming temptations? Let us examine ourselves seriously on these points, and make acts of sorrow for all faults or shortcomings, together with firm and practical resolutions for the time to come.

End with "Our Father."

4.—ON DISSIPATION.

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God, and after making an act of faith and humble adoration, let us beg light and grace to see the dangers and misery of dissipation, and to apply those means which will protect us from yielding to it.

Point 1.—*What is a dissipated soul?*—It is a soul which is seldom present to itself, or considers itself. In it the imagination is like some public market-place, in which all sorts of people are perpetually coming and going, hustling each other; and where each is trying to further his own individual interests; where all is noise and hurry, and where it is hard to hear or to be heard in the midst of the bustle and confusion.

Dissipation throws open all the gates of the soul, and the passions rush in and out, and a thousand thoughts cause it to forget self and to busy itself about others and things which do not concern it, and thus the soul becomes deaf to the inspirations of God, blind

to the things of God, loses its taste for prayer, and all feeling for self-denial.

Point 2.—What is a dissipated soul?—It is one which never interests itself in the present, or endeavours to discharge its actual duties perfectly and with right intention, but goes back to the past or looks forward to the future, wasting itself on fruitless and dangerous memories or on idle hopes, fears, and imaginations which may be never realized. The result is habitual waste of time, constant beginning, but never finishing new undertakings, and a habit of day-dreaming and unreality.

*Point 3.—*In the dissipated soul, the imagination is ceaselessly at work, and the will is never fixed permanently on anything, but is constantly changing. It is carried away hither and thither by sensible objects, now depressed and sad, now exuberant and gay. It is indiscreet in speech, irritable, and inconstant, and is agitated by countless faults and bitter regrets.

Point 4.—What are the remedies to be applied?—If this dissipation arises from a natural restlessness and fickleness of disposition, it is almost impossible to overcome it; and such a person should be employed in useful and pious occupations, and should be *kept at them*. These should be only interrupted by frequent renewal of intention, self-examination, and spiritual reading in private, together with silence at all times, except during recreation. If it arises from interior aridity and disrelish of prayer, then it is well to cut off all unnecessary going about, all visiting or gossiping with others, and to give more time to spiritual reading, acts of recollection, frequent acts of the presence of God, and also to repress all impulsiveness in word or action.

Let us see how far we have given way to this dissipation, and whether it has not influenced us in regard

of our spiritual progress. Let us resolve to renew our application to discharge faithfully the duties of our state of life, especially those which regard God our Lord; to speak only when and as much as is quite necessary; to take as our motto, *Age quod agis*, and to do earnestly and perfectly each of our duties, no matter how small and insignificant they may seem to be; and finally to acquire a habit of making frequent acts of recollection and of the presence of God.

End with "Our Father."

5.—ON MEDITATION.

If there is one duty more important than any or all others for those who would strive to attain perfection, it is the duty of prayer. From a neglect of this have arisen the spiritual calamities of whole bodies of men as well as of individuals, as the Spirit of God declares, "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart."¹ It is by inducing us to grow remiss, negligent, and indifferent in regard of this duty, that the enemy of our human nature most commonly succeeds in drawing us into a state of tepidity in God's service, and into the temptations of sin. Hence we should often examine ourselves to see how we are affected with regard to it.

We will then consider the excellence of mental prayer, and its necessity for us in our state of life, and finally how we are to reduce it to practice.

Preparatory prayer will be as usual.

Point 1.—Nothing is more recommended in holy books, more insisted upon by the teaching and example

¹ Jerem. xii. 11.

of the saints and of the great masters of spiritual life and the founders of Religious Orders, such as St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, and St. Augustine, than the practice of meditation. They speak of it as the *light*, the *food*, and the *medicine* of the soul. Just as *light* is necessary for the life and the exercise of the duties of men, and as without it society could not exist, and nature would be thrown into confusion, &c., so without prayer the soul would be darkened, and would lose all supernatural life, and would end in moral confusion and death.

Without a due supply of *nourishment* the body would become enfeebled and gradually lose its power of action, would decay and die; so also without prayer the soul's strength and energy would be undermined, and its intellectual power and moral energy would soon become paralyzed and lose all capability of rising above the mere use of its natural powers, and thereby would fail in attaining the end for which it has been created.

Again, just as the body is liable to decay and is exposed to countless disorders, weaknesses, and diseases, and hence requires frequent *medicines* to preserve its health and stave off the approaches of death, so also the soul is exposed to innumerable diseases, such as vanity, pride, sensuality, self-love, self-indulgence, envy, sloth, &c.; all or any one of which, unless cured or held in check by meditation and prayer, would soon become mortal in their effects.

Others, again, call meditation the strength of the soul, the source and fountain from which all virtues flow, the basis and column which support and maintain them in the soul. They speak of it as the weapon by which our enemies are disarmed and dispersed, the means of appeasing the anger of God, the key to unlock the treasure-house of Heaven, and the instru-

ment to draw down all graces from God. From all this we learn how strongly the saints recommend prayer.

Point 2.—The necessity of prayer.—There is an obligation incumbent on all to become saints. The law is universal. *Estote sancti*—"Be ye saints."¹ Now, for this three conditions are required: we must hate sin, we must be detached from all creatures, and we must love God. But without meditation and the spirit of prayer we cannot hope to attain any one of these, and consequently could not possibly fulfil the law.

Further, without the grace of God it is impossible for us to perform the smallest supernatural action, and in every instant and circumstance of life we stand in need of this grace; but a condition of securing it is prayer, and hence we see its necessity, which is inculcated by our Lord, saying, "It behoveth always to pray, and that without failing,"² and again, "Pray lest ye enter into temptation."³ The example of our Blessed Lord further impresses this same necessity upon us.

Point 3.—The practice of meditation is especially incumbent upon us, for many reasons. First, because God has through St. Ignatius provided us with a special and easy method of meditation; secondly, for the fulfilment of the arduous duties of our state of life, we require at all times extraordinary helps and graces; and we may presume with reason that those helps will be only measured out to us in proportion to our fidelity in the use of the method of prayer which has been given to us.

Point 4.—Let us examine then how we appreciate this gift of God? Do we practise it and observe the various Additions faithfully? Do we give the full time

¹ Comp. Ephes. i. 4; Coloss. iii. 12; 1 St. Peter i. 15, 16.

² St. Luke xviii. 1.

³ St. Matt. xxvi. 41; St. Mark xiv. 38.

to it? Do we seriously apply the three powers of the soul?

If we find that we have been guilty of any negligence and have grown remiss or apathetic, let us seriously resolve to correct ourselves and to resume our former fervour and exactness. Any neglect on this matter must induce sad consequences.

6.—ON MORTIFICATION.

The Sacred Scriptures of the New Dispensation in most of its pages either directly or indirectly urges the necessity of this virtue. The saints, following in the footsteps of our Lord, have invariably practised it, and in fact we may say that Christianity itself rests upon it and flourishes and is promoted by it. As the vine stands in need of the pruning-knife that it may flourish and bear fruit, so also must every member of the true vine bring forth true fruit by the exercise of mortification and penance.

Let us consider its necessity and the several motives which must influence us in adopting and practising it.

Point 1.—The necessity of it is proved to us by the teaching of God in the Sacred Scriptures. Thus it is made a *condition of supernatural life*. “For if in the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.”¹ It is laid down as the alternative of condemnation: “For unless ye do penance, ye shall all perish.”² And again our Blessed Lord inculcates it as a necessity if we would follow Him, saying, “Whosoever will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and so follow

¹ Romans viii. 13; 1 St. Peter iii. 18.

² St. Luke xiii. 5; St. Matt. iii. 2.

Me;”¹ nay, He tells us that it is the sign by which we are to decide who is worthy of Him.² All these passages tend to show that mortification is necessary for all who deserve the name of Christian; what then are we to conclude with regard to those who are chosen to a higher degree of perfection and of closer imitation of and union with Jesus Christ, if not that they should in an especial manner excel in this virtue, bearing about them the mortification of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in them.

Point 2.—Various are the motives which urge us to this mortification.

(a) I am a companion of Christ, whose life in infancy and in His youth, in His private and public career, was one continuous privation, amid poverty and labour, one long act of mortification. If I then love Christ, my ambition should be to follow in His steps, and with St. Paul “to fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.”³

(β) Again, if we are called to the apostolate, and all of us are to a greater or lesser extent, we are also called upon to fast and pray. By sufferings and blood our Lord saved the world, and this salvation must by blood be continued and applied to the souls of men through the ministrations of the apostolate.

(γ) St. Ignatius made more account of the *vinde teipsum, i.e.*, of mortification, than even of prayer. This was the lesson which St. Francis Xavier declared he had learned above all others from his spiritual father, Ignatius. St. Francis Borgia made it the measure and test of sanctity, as without it no man can excel, either in the spirit of prayer, or charity, or humility.

(δ) Finally, when we consider the heavy debt which we have incurred to the Divine justice, by our sins,

¹ St. Matt. xxi. 24; St. Luke ix. 23.

² St. Matt. x. 38.

³ Coloss. i. 24.

faults, and negligences of the past ; the rebellion of our passions, and the risings of concupiscence in the present ; the dangers which loom before us in the future, we must see the necessity of mortification here or of suffering hereafter. Add to this that the religious life supposes us to devote ourselves as victims for the sins of others, and also to draw down graces and means of salvation for the souls of others which involves the necessity of prayer and mortification.

Point 3.—How is this to be reduced to practice ? The chief method of practising mortification, is by overcoming our natural inclinations to pride, self-indulgence, and sensuality, and as a means and help to this, by external penances such as are enumerated by St. Ignatius in the tenth Addition of the Spiritual Exercises.

Let us examine ourselves and see how far we appreciate the necessity and motives of this virtue ; also how far we reduce it to practice. What changes are to be made in it in our present life, &c. Do we bear bravely all those sufferings which befall us against our own will, or which we voluntary assume whether they affect the body or our own will and judgment ? Do we rejoice to see ourselves suffer, without trying to escape ? Do we abstain from all superfluity in regard of food, sleep, clothing, &c. ? Do we repress desires of praise, amusements, and indulgences ? When offended by any words or acts of others, do we keep silence ? Do we in return try to requite it by some favour or gracious act, or at all events try to approve of it, or at least find an excuse for it ?

7.—ON CHARITY.

On this important subject we may consider the importance and necessity of striving to obtain its perfection; the urgent motives which prompt us to do so; and the qualities by which it is to be distinguished.

Point 1.—Its importance.—This is clear from the fact that it is the first commandment which God has engraved on the human heart, and has been earnestly recommended by Him in all time.

(a) In the New Dispensation, the love of our neighbour and of God Himself are placed in the same rank.¹ Nay, God has insisted most on the love of our neighbour, and has made it the test of our love of Himself. He even requires of us that we love our enemies;² and we are to be ever striving to attain the perfection of that love for others which Christ has had for us.³

(β) Not content with all this, in His last discourse with His Apostles our dear Lord specifies it as the mark by which the world was to know that we are His disciples;⁴ at the General Judgment it is to be rewarded by eternal possession of God, whilst its non-observance is to be visited by everlasting punishment.

Point 2.—The qualities.—Our Blessed Lord manifests the qualities which this charity must possess, by His own example.

(a) His charity was ever *active*, in healing the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the sick, and the dead. All this we may imitate *spiritually* as occasions may and

¹ Comp. St. Matt. xix.—xxii.; Romans xiii.; Galat. v.; St. James ii. 8; St. Mark xii.; 1 St. Peter ii.

² St. Matt. v. 44; St. Luke vi. 27. ³ St. John xiii. xv.

⁴ St. John xiii. 35.

will often present themselves; and sometimes also we may exercise corporal works of mercy.

(β) His charity was *patient*. So too we must suffer in the care of souls, we shall have to employ plans, industries, and means to overcome obstacles; and to sacrifice conveniences, health, and self. So did our Blessed Lord. We must be ashamed to show less earnestness in the cause of the salvation of our neighbour than the devil does for his destruction.

(γ) His charity was *compassionate* and sympathetic, He took upon Him all our infirmities for that purpose.¹ He bore with rudeness, coarseness, infirmities, heedlessness, frivolity, and selfishness; all of which are more deserving of pity than of contempt and aversion. With heroic meekness He suffered obstinacy, ingratitude, cowardice, treachery, and deceit.

Point 3.—What are the grounds of true charity?—(α) We must love others, because they are the objects of the intense love of God the Father, and because they are members of the mystical body of God the Son, and because they are the consecrated temples of God the Holy Ghost.

(β) Again, they are made to the image and likeness of God, and consequently if we love the reality, we must of necessity love that which bears its stamp and resemblance.

(γ) Our neighbours are created to live and reign with us in eternal glory, are co-heirs with us of God and of His well-beloved Son, have been redeemed from slavery, and have been purchased by the same life-blood.

(δ) Lastly, our Blessed Lord has placed them as substitutes for Himself as the objects for our charity, and declares that our conduct towards them will be regarded as if it were done for Himself.²

¹ Hebrews v. 2.

² St. Matt. x. 42.

(e) If we study the lives and conduct of the saints, we find that all, without exception, have been marked for their spirit of charity. It was in this that the Christians from the earliest times have gloried; this spirit has always animated Holy Church, and has raised up Religious Orders of both sexes for the promotion of every kind of charity whether corporal or spiritual; and at times the saints have melted down the sacred vessels to provide means of charity.

*Point 4.—What are the marks of charity?—*The marks of this charity will be to suffer with those who are in pain, and rejoice with those who are happy and successful; in act and in speech to treat our neighbour as we ourselves would wish to be treated by others; to prefer the ease and comfort and success of others to our own, to show unfeigned reverence and respect towards others, to repay evil with good in word and deed, to think well of others.

Let us examine and see how we stand in all these respects. Do we treat others with reverence and respect, as the children of God and representatives of Christ? Do we shut our eyes to their faults and defects? Do we think and speak well of them, and act kindly and considerately towards them? Do we put ourselves to inconveniences and sacrifice ourselves for them? Do we sympathize with them and try to promote their interests and their success? Do we give way to any special attachment and thus expose holy charity to danger, or yield to feelings of special aversion?

If we find that there is anything to correct in these respects, let us regret and amend it at once. Let us pray in conclusion, that the God of all charity will inflame us with the fire of His love that we may be consumed with Christian charity.

End with "Our Father."

8.—ON USE OF TIME.

How important it is that we should examine ourselves on this subject is clear, when we see how recklessly it is wasted and too often abused, and how, by many, it is a study how "to kill time." If we shall be accountable before God for every idle word, and this thought has made even saints tremble, how much more serious will be the account which we shall have to render for the waste and abuse of time? This may be done, not only by doing nothing, but also by employing it in things which in no way concern us, or by discharging our actions in a bad or imperfect manner. How grievous this fault is may be the better understood by considering the great value of time, the singular providence of God with regard to it, and the shortness and uncertainty of the tenure of it.

Point 1.—The value of time.—It is one of God's greatest gifts to man, inasmuch as without it all natural action would be impossible, and in the supernatural order there could be no merit. Again, on its right use depends our eternal happiness.

In every minute of time a man may obtain pardon for his sins, no matter how many and grievous they may have been; he may, by God's grace, be freed from the slavery of the devil and restored to the friendship of God, and instead of Hell may regain his lost inheritance of glory.

As every minute of our lives is a grace purchased for us by the Incarnate Son of God in the crib and on the Cross, and consequently by His Sacred Blood, let us beware of losing any part of it, lest by so doing we waste and squander that Sacred Blood.

Point 2.—Let us consider God's providence in regard of time. In His dealing with man our God is most generous in everything. The whole of Nature bears testimony to it. The senses of our bodies, the faculties of our souls, the variety and multitude of the temporal goods with which He surrounds us, the countless inspirations of mind and aspirations of the heart with which He is constantly favouring us, are evidences of His thoughtfulness and prodigality of generosity: but with regard to time He gives it only from instant to instant: nor does He ever promise to any man a repetition or continuance of it, so that no man can promise himself five minutes more of life than he actually possesses. Each minute as it becomes present is ours, and our eternity in a certain sense and our glory to a certain degree depends upon the use we make of it, and every quarter of an hour may add prodigiously to our happiness or misery for all eternity. How solemn a thought is this! It is this which made the saints so scrupulous in the husbanding of time; which caused them to contract even the hours of necessary relaxation and sleep, and to have their minds and hearts ever concentrated on God. It is this thought which as the worm of conscience torments the lost souls, who will for ever bewail the abuse which they made of time when it was placed at their command.

Point 3.—*The shortness and uncertainty of time.*—The Sacred Scriptures are full of declarations regarding this point. The days of man are short,¹ and they are filled with many miseries.² Nay, time itself is short.³ It passeth as a cloud over the face of heaven, as an arrow from the bow, as a ship over the bosom of the waters, or as a flower of the field. In all these ways does the Spirit of God impress this truth upon us.

As regards the uncertainty of its tenure, our dear

¹ Job xiv. 5.

² Job xiv. 1.

³ 1 Cor. vii. 29.

Lord in His parables urges this truth upon us, thereby to guard us against all waste of it and to impel us to employ it well. Nay, He declares that He will come like a thief in the night, and when we least expect it: that we may suddenly lose all those things which for so long we have been amassing: that as a bridegroom He may surprise us whilst we are asleep. Does not daily experience, especially of late years, impress this uncertainty of life upon us by the vast number of sudden deaths? And this in persons of every age, state, and condition?

• And as to its shortness, if we recall the years which we have lived, they have passed, and have left nothing behind but a dim and vague remembrance: so, too, the rest will fly by. If we abstract the time spent in sleep, or in taking our meals, amusements, unnecessary recreations, and other merely natural actions, the days of infancy and early youth, and the years spent in sin, alas! how little of life is left which we have spent in preparing for, or is worthy of, Heaven! How necessary then to use the rest of our time differently.

How then should we employ our time? (1) We must keep steadily to our spiritual duties; (2) fulfil the duties of our state of life; (3) do what we owe to our station; (4) fill up our spare time well; (5) whatever we do, must be done in a spirit of faith and love.

9.—ON MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

As the world has its maxims and principles by the adoption and by the application of which the spirit of the world is preserved, fostered, and promoted, so too they that are not of the world, but are anxious to cultivate an opposite spirit, must have their maxims and principles, by observance of which they may securely attain what is the will of God, which is their sanctification.¹

1. To be men, it is our duty to act in all things by reason.

To be Christians, we must crucify our vices and concupiscences.

To be saints, we must die to ourselves and live conformable to Jesus Christ.

2. It is a delusion to expect to become saints in a day. To attain sanctity we must mount step by step like the man who ascends a ladder. On the way we must not be surprised or discouraged if we frequently make a slip or actually fall. To grieve unduly or to lose heart is often the effect of pride and annoyance to find ourselves weaker and more frail than we like to acknowledge; and is a great danger and obstacle in the way of perfection. We must imitate the person who on his way has fallen down. He picks himself up as soon as possible and hurries on, instead of remaining and rolling on the ground to spite himself for falling, which impedes and prevents him from advancing and making progress on his journey.

3. We must lay it down as a principle that "great things depend on small, and small things lead to great." Consequently we must never delude and flatter our-

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 7.

selves with the thought, or excuse ourselves with the expression, that "it is only a small inspiration which I have rejected, only a trifling act of mortification which I have neglected." Let us always bear in mind that nothing which can contribute to eternal salvation is small: and that the most insignificant action of a person who is in the grace and friendship of God is capable of meriting an eternal increase of glory. Of this we have the instances of Jesus and Mary, the greater part of whose lives were spent in the performance of actions which according to the estimation of men were small and ordinary and of no great account.

4. We must avoid dissipation, and unnecessary and useless recreation. Rather let us do for our souls, what we are used to do for our bodies in cold and wintry weather. We shut our doors and windows, and make a good fire. So let us close the doors and windows of our souls by restraining our eyes from idle curiosity and promiscuous reading, and our tongues from useless or idle conversation, and ourselves from unprofitable visitings or meddling in things which do not concern us; and by prayer and union with God keep alive within us the love of and union with God and the fire of Divine charity.

5. We must always bear in mind that saying of St. Bernard: "In our affections, there must be nothing above God, nothing equal to God, and nothing to share the heart with God. He will never be content to share our hearts with anything created, but is a jealous lover who will not be content unless with our whole heart and mind and soul we love Him."¹

6. Just as we must always wind up a clock, or it will cease to go and tell the hour, and we must be ever weeding the ground, or it will cease to produce fruits or

¹ Prov. xxiii. 26.

flowers, so must we by vigilance in watching and rooting out our vicious or wayward inclinations, keep our souls pure and advance in the way of perfection.

7. Lastly, we should have frequent intercourse with a prudent director. It keeps us always on our guard, it draws down great blessings from God, inasmuch as it is at once a great exercise of humility and of self-denial.

Let us examine how far we have imbibed these maxims and how far we have regulated our lives according to these principles; which of them have we most ignored or neglected; and let us determine to observe them more faithfully for the future.

10.—ON ORDINARY ACTIONS.

There is a law imposed upon every Christian which obliges him at all times and in all circumstances and conditions of life, which is, *Estote sancti*—"Be ye holy."¹ By this we are all bound to aim at sanctity. Then it cannot be so difficult of attainment.

1. But in what does it consist? Not in great and high contemplation, nor in long vocal or mental prayers, nor in severe fasts and corporal penances; for to many these are practical impossibilities; but true sanctity consists in the imitation of our Blessed Lord, in the right and proper discharge of the duties of our state of life. Sanctity then is not in the doing of extraordinary things, but in the performance of our ordinary actions extraordinarily well. Now, for this three things are required, namely, a right intention in all we do, and that our actions be performed thoroughly, and all in

¹ Levit. xx. 7; 1 St. Peter i. 16; Ephes. i. 4.

their proper time, with right mind, alacrity of will, and diligent execution.

2. Perfect intention is either positive or negative. The latter supposes that we exclude all sinful, merely human and natural motives in what we do, all acting without reflection and from mere impulse. This becomes more difficult whenever the actions are of short duration, or are pleasant and harmonize with our tastes and inclinations. The former supposes us to aim in all we do, no matter how small and short the things may be in themselves, at some supernatural motive: either for the greater glory of God our Lord and of His saints, or for the spiritual or temporal good of our neighbour, or for our own spiritual profit. Thus at one time we may animate ourselves to perform our actions in a spirit of penance for our own sins or for those of others, at another to prove our love for Jesus Christ or for His Father's glory, at another to obtain some special grace or favour of which we ourselves may stand in need, or which we desire for others, &c., or for all these several objects combined.

3. As to the alacrity of will, we should not perform our duties in a spirit of moroseness, or sadness, or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver,¹ and it is an insult to Him, and a source of scandal to others, to look wretched and unhappy in paying Him service; but, on the contrary, we ought to show our cheerfulness and readiness in all we do, not only in things pleasant and agreeable to us, but also and especially in those which are laborious, unpleasant, and repugnant.

We must also be diligent in the execution of our ordinary actions.

This is more necessary in those duties which are of daily recurrence, as from their frequency we are more inclined to perform them out of mere routine and in a

¹ 2 Cor. ix. 7.

cursory kind of way. Such are the daily duties of meditation and of the general and particular examination of conscience, and those special duties attached to the state or office in which we find ourselves.

This diligence must be extended to the *manner* as well as to the *time* in which we perform them.

As regards the *manner*, we should remember that as we should do all from a supernatural motive, it is a kind of insult to God whom we serve, that they should be performed in a slovenly, half and half, and imperfect manner, no matter how lowly the things may be; and we should bear in mind the maxim: "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well;" and again, the peace and satisfaction of doing anything thoroughly and perfectly more than compensates for the extra labour.

And as to doing everything in its proper *time*, it is not only an exercise of constant self-conquest and it is a great secret of avoiding waste and abuse of time, but of itself is required if we mean to do our actions well and to make progress in the way of perfection. "By Thy ordinance the day goeth on."¹

Hence, that we may perform our ordinary actions well, let us commence even the least actions by the sign of the Cross, or by bending of the knee, or by applying the hand to the heart, &c.

If the act be of some duration, let us reflect on what we are going to do, for whom and for how long.

If it be pleasant, let us protest that we will do it for God; if unpleasant, that we will perform it cheerfully for God's sake.

In our chief actions let us recall the faults to which we are more liable in their performance, such as sloth, want of earnestness or of perseverance; and resolve against it.

¹ Psalm cxviii. 91.

Finally, we should acquire a habit of some short form which may express a perfect offering, such as, *In te, pro te, cum te, ex te, mi Deus, in sanctissimis Jesu et Mariæ cordibus.*

From time to time, it is well to ponder the example of our Lord, of whom it is written, "He did all things well."¹ "What things are pleasing to Him, I do always."² "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me."³

11.—ON HUMAN RESPECT.

Our Blessed Lord, during His mortal life, verified the prophecy of the holy old man Simeon,⁴ and ever since between Him and the world there has been war, in the way of thinking and of judging, as to laws and the rules of conduct; and as yet no man has succeeded in pleasing both, nor will it ever be possible, for God has said it.⁵

If we would then please God, we must make up our minds to trample upon human respect and to disregard the opinions of men, and to reject all fear of what the world will say, whenever there is question of performing our duty.

For this let us consider how human respect dishonours and degrades a man and is injurious to him, and how it outrages the majesty of God, and how in practice it is to be overcome.

1. Human respect is an inordinate desire of pleasing men, or a fear of displeasing them, whereby we are led either to omit the good we ought to do, or perform the evil which we should avoid. By it our moral liberty and independence are sacrificed, and we subject our-

¹ St. Mark vii. 37.

² St. John viii. 29.

³ St. John iv. 34.

⁴ St. Luke ii. 34.

⁵ St. Luke xvi. 13.

selves to those persons or principles which we are bound to despise, or to a certain vague and undefined public which would most surely ultimately respect us if we acted with firmness and consistency, and only pities and despises us if it sees us bending before or submitting to its tyranny.

It further betrays great weakness of judgment. Experience shows that it is quite impossible to please everybody, as the judgments and appreciations of men are so different, and the proverb is always being proved, *Tot sententiæ quot sunt capita*, or, Many men of many minds. What a pitiful weakness then is it to wish to please the less virtuous and less sensible and more frivolous portion of the community.

2. It is, moreover, positively injurious and detrimental to those who as slaves submit to be influenced by it.

For it renders a true peace of mind impossible, as on the one side there is constant fear of the world and how it may regard us, and on the other remorse of conscience invariably torments us for our cowardice and hypocrisy.

Further, it exposes our salvation to imminent peril. Alas! how many are lost through it! And what an amount of good is neglected or prevented through it!

How many poor sinners are thereby held in a captivity from which they would gladly escape? how many who are the victims of a false or unholy friendship, or of false doctrines which they dare not reject for fear of what the world will say, or of the pain which they would cause, or of the contempt or condemnation they would unjustly incur? How many has human respect brought to a violent end by duels or suicide, or held enchained in mortal sin by bad company, by loose conversations, by frequenting the theatre, the opera, or dangerous dances?

3. It is also an outrage against the majesty of God.

God is the Lord of the universe and the Lawgiver of mankind. He is the All-just, the All-wise, and the All-holy. Hence His law is most just, most wise, and most holy, and consequently our glory depends upon our observance of it. And man is the work of His hands, and on Him depends for the use of his senses, and for the preservation of every breath of his body and of every movement of his soul.

Now this Supreme Lord issues His command, and man, this worm of the earth, demurs and refuses to obey! and his pretext is, *thereby to save his honour!* Are then the commands of God dishonourable? He whose judgments are just, whose counsels are righteous, can He enjoin anything which is not most noble, honourable, and praiseworthy?

God commands, He threatens with Hell, He promises the eternal bliss of Heaven, and yet the victim of human respect foregoes all because N. will say this, and N. will do that, or N.N. will be pained, or will be offended and will reproach him.

Thus there is a deliberate preference of the favour of men to that of God, and the gross crime of the Jewish rabble is repeated and intensified, who cried out once, "Not this Man, but Barabbas. Give us Barabbas and let this one be crucified."¹

The obligation of confessing God outwardly² is ignored, and the ignominy of being rejected by Him is deliberately incurred. Moreover, the slave of human respect is in the language of Holy Writ declared to be an idolater, seeing that he substitutes the creature in place of the Creator, and to him in preference pays homage and reverence which is due to God alone.

4. We must choose now between the scoffs of a few men for a short time and the sarcasm of the host of

¹ St. Luke xxiii. 18.

² St. Luke xi. 26.

devils and of men in the dungeons of Hell for eternity, and must leave the broad way of fashion and of worldliness, or must resign all hope of entering the narrow gate which opens into the realms of never-ending bliss. If we now resist this shameful weakness, we shall escape the wretched company of those who will be forced to exclaim: "These are they whom we held in derision, and whose lives we esteemed as a disgrace. We fools esteemed their lives as a madness and their end without honour, and lo! they are numbered among the saints."¹

Let us remember that every time we yield to this weakness we rivet a new link to our chains and increase our degradation under a miserable and ignoble tyranny, we submit to a slavery most unworthy of the noble soul which God has given to us. Why should we consent to waste our lives at the beck of another, without any gain and at such an irreparable loss? And who are they who lord it over the slaves of human respect? They are the vilest and least noble of men, whose jeers should be rather our praise and glory, and whose praise and esteem should be our reproach and shame: men whose threats are mere empty talk, and who can do you no harm unless you prove weak and yield to them. "Fear not them who can only kill the body, but cannot hurt the soul."

5. What is the remedy for this weakness? From the first we must modestly assert our independence, but always with uncompromising firmness, especially when we make new acquaintances.

We must mould and regulate our lives and views by the principles of holy faith, and live in the practical consciousness of our own dignity and of the duties and obligations which it involves.

This spirit of faith must be kept alive by great fidelity to our spiritual duties, and by a frequent

¹ Wisdom v. 3-5.

reception of the holy sacraments of the Church. We must also repress with energy the first whisperings of human respect and the first insinuations of "what the world will say."

12.—ON LOVE OF ENEMIES.

In the New Law our Lord has insisted on our loving not only our friends, but also our enemies, and this by word and by His own example: and requires of His followers to pray for those who persecute and calumniate them, and to do good to those who hate them.¹ Now, by enemies we are to understand all those towards whom we feel dislike or anger, whether by reason of certain *defects of character*, such as impulsiveness, or pride, or melancholy, or inconstancy, or vanity, and the like, or because they ignore what we consider is due to us in the way of respect, service, or charity, or because they bear ill-feeling and show unkindness to us, &c.

1. Now, if we have this our obligation at heart, we shall with all earnestness and promptitude stamp out all ill-will, and sincerely wish and try to promote their well-being and success: we shall be careful to conceal the annoyance they may cause us, and to avoid speaking disparagingly of them.

We must beware of betraying any sign or trace of dislike, impatience, weariness, or anger—nay, rather, we must strive to anticipate them with kindness, seek their company rather than shun them, and often in prayer recommend them to God.

2. It is right and just that we should practise this love for our enemies. It is too true that we have been enemies of God, and that perhaps for a long time, and

¹ St. Luke vi. 28.

have by many and great sins proved ourselves mean and ungrateful to Him. And yet how often and how generously has He forgiven us! And that, too, most fully. Moreover, He has been unremitting in heaping fresh favours upon us. All this, independent of His other claims, gives Him a right to require from us a similar treatment of others, which He does,¹ transferring His own claims upon us to those who are our enemies.

3. It is also a useful and advantageous law, inasmuch as it thus enables us to secure forgiveness for our many hidden and venial sins, and for our repeated negligences and omissions of duty.² It, moreover, furnishes us with occasions of gaining great merit and glory, as it is the highest and most difficult mode of exercising charity, and at the same time is the distinctive mark by which our charity differs from that of heathens.³

In practice, then, it is well in meditation, in colloquies, and in Mass often to pray for this spirit, and for such as are a source of trial. If we are associated with those who have faults of character, let us remember that they have also many good qualities, and let us think of these, which we are inclined to overlook or to forget, rather than look on their bad qualities, which too often we are apt to exaggerate. How differently should we view the same defects in others if they were our friends, and how ready and ingenious should we be to find excuses for them. A holy man has observed that as a rule every one has nine parts good and praiseworthy, and but one part bad or worthy of blame. Let us shut our eyes to this latter, and fix them wide open on the former.

It is well for us also to bear in mind that we too have our weaknesses and defects, and perhaps of the same kind or even worse, and that we expect others to

¹ St. Matt. v. 44.

² St. Matt. vi.

³ St. Matt. v. 46.

bear with us, and to overlook them. If others maltreat us, speak disparagingly of us, or judge us harshly, after all it is only what we deserve, or perhaps it is much less than our deserts; and consequently we have no reason to murmur or complain: nay, it is a comfort to think that these things supply us with an occasion of gaining merit, and are a means of increasing our sanctification, and of imitating the example of our Blessed Lord.

Do not let us be outdone by persons in the world who consider it a part of good breeding and politeness to repress all signs of vindictiveness and aversion or intolerance in regard of others, and who regard self-sacrifice and repression of feelings as the first conditions of a gentleman; and taking example from the saints, let us be in earnest henceforth in the love of our enemies, and in doing good to those who hate us, and in praying for those who persecute and calumniate us.

13.—ON SELF-CONQUEST.

We may define it as a virtue which punishes and reduces to order the irregular motions of soul or body. Accordingly, it may be distinguished into internal and external, positive and negative.

1. The necessity of this virtue is evident not only from the manner in which our Blessed Lord insists upon it in His teaching, but also from the example which He has left to all His followers. It is further shown to us in the lives of all those who have followed in His footsteps and have been distinguished by their holiness. Our own experience must also convince us that without the constant practice of this virtue it is impossible for us to hope to please God and to avoid

sin, and to keep the senses of our body and the passions of our souls in due subjection or under right control.

2. The *advantages* of cultivating and practising this virtue are many and great, amongst which we may mention the following :

(a) It enables us to make satisfaction for our past sins, and for those hidden ones which are unknown or forgotten, and also for our daily faults and sins of frailty. The satisfaction thus made during this life is far less severe than that which else we should have to make in the next world, and which would there be merely expiatory and non-meritorious.

(β) It facilitates the avoidance of sin in the future, as thereby our passions are weakened and more easily reduced to order, and the soul is habituated to resist the attractions of pleasure, of pride, and independence; and the undue fear of hardship and pain is overcome.

(γ) By it we furnish the best proof of the fervour and solidity of our love of God, and our desires to become men of prayer; and union with God is kept alive in the soul.

(δ) It is the condition without which we shall have but little or no hope of increasing, preserving, or acquiring perfection.

(ε) Finally, it is a most effectual means of acquiring peace of mind.

3. *The practice of interior mortification.*—The most important exercise of this virtue is the interior, to which exterior penance is only or chiefly a means, and is the more difficult. Of this we stand constantly in need, and from it no one is exempted, and the occasions which call for it are ever present to each of us, no matter how old we may be or in whatsoever position.

It may be exercised in a multitude of ways, as for example :

(α) By repressing all curiosity about other persons, about their doings, their failings, and their appointments; also all canvassing of their aptitude for this or that office, their qualities whether good or bad. To this we may add the avoidance of forming conjectures and of a morbid desire after news whether political, social, or domestic.

(β) By avoiding all impetuosity or mere impulse in things which we may undertake; and rather to foresee and calculate the possibility of failure, and prepare ourselves to counteract or avert it.

(γ) If we are inclined to seek some indulgence or gratification with excessive ardour and undue desire of obtaining it, by either checking it or by firmly foregoing it altogether.

(δ) By never consenting to do even a good thing at a wrong time through natural feeling or through eagerness, as for example, to sit up at night to devour a new book, or to prepare for an examination, and the like.

(ε) By keeping down eagerness or anxiety about letters, or about some favourite study, occupation, or amusement, or by anticipating those which we dislike, and by repressing all desires about a change of place, superiors, and the rest.

In doing this we see how in our daily life we may practise real mortification, and may say with the Apostle, *Quotidie morior*.

4. As regards exterior mortification, various practices suggest themselves, and to be perfect it involves the cutting off of *all unnecessary* satisfaction, either of the senses of the body or of the faculties of the soul; as also the infliction of positive pain, as we see in the contemplation of "Two Standards," the "Three Degrees of Humility," and "The Three Classes of Men." But to enter into some details.

(a) We may deny our *eyes* the sight of natural

beauty either of persons or things, of worldly pomp or splendour, and even of scenery.

(β) We may deny our *ears* the indulgence of conversation, or of the pleasures derived from music, and the like.

(γ) We may subdue the *palate* both as to the kind, the quality, and the quantity of our repasts, and more particularly as regards our drink.

(δ) We may occasionally fast, moderate our sleep as to the time and manner of taking it; and also practise great exactness in rising.

(ε) Bravery in supporting the inconveniences attendant on the varieties of the weather, in always assuming a modest position in sitting, &c., often costs more than taking the discipline or wearing a chain or hair-shirt.

14.—ON TRANQUILLITY OF MIND.

1. Peace of mind is a great treasure, and for many reasons merits great esteem, and its attainment deserves all our efforts. The possession of it renders the rule of reason practicable, and provides us with strength and courage under temptations and difficulties, and enables us to make progress in virtue. But without this tranquillity reason too often gives place to impulse or feeling, we become inconstant and fickle, and despondent and rebellious under our trials.

2. Among the means whereby we may reasonably hope to attain it are:

(α) To be convinced that sufferings are the law of man's and much more of the Christian's existence; as a holy man has said, *Homo natus est ad laborem sicut avis ad volandum*: consequently, to escape it is hopeless, and the effort to do so only adds to our suffering. There-

fore, the only wise course to adopt is to submit at least patiently, if not cheerfully: and to remember that our lot is far easier than that of others.

(β) To entertain a sovereign contempt for the things of this world, and consequently to regard their loss as not worth a thought: and to hold the praise or censure of this world as equally beneath our notice.

(γ) Not to be carried away by natural activity, but to keep it under due control: and avoid too many different occupations. The greater their number, the less perfectly will each be performed, as the less care and attention can be bestowed upon each.

(δ) To regard your office not as a task, but as a work of love. It is by so doing that you will take an interest in it and give yourself up to it: and not to mix yourself up in the affairs of others, as you neither help them nor yourself, but may injure both.

(ε) Always remember that in our lives violent trials and crises come as surely as storms in the air, and like them, often from unexpected quarters, and when we least dream of them.

(ζ) Banish all anxiety about future troubles, which probably will never come; and prepare yourself for future failures with perfect resignation to the ever-blessed will of God. And see in all events, whether bright or dark, the loving hand of God.

(η) Avoid all deliberate venial faults, or violation of rules.

(θ) Let your spiritual life be marked by prudence, moderation, spirit, and courage: and consequently when you fall do not yield to immoderate grief, but make an act of sorrow, and renew your fervour. Acknowledge your shortcomings, and conceive high purposes of virtue; but banish any desire of perfection which disturbs your peace of soul.

15.—ON WATCHING AND PRAYER.

Our Blessed Lord insisted much on this two-fold duty as the means of not only being victorious over temptations, but also as a means by which we may stave them off, or at all events may be prepared for them. So, too, St. Peter¹ and St. Paul² urge this same lesson. So, too, the saints by word and example insist upon it as a condition of holiness. It is with the same object that St. Ignatius prescribes retreats; and in the Rules of his Society special triduums are ordained, whereby the spirit of watching and of prayer may be kept alive and promoted. And it is with good reason, for we are all too prone to fall asleep in the service of God, and to suffer from the influences of the things of this earth and of the present, and to shut our eyes to those of Heaven. Now, as it is impossible for us to gain Heaven without vigilance and prayer, so by the regular use of them it will be impossible to fail in securing it, as by them we shall correct our faults, and shall turn to good account the graces which God will bestow on us.

1. Without watchfulness, what time will be lost! what faults and sins will be committed! what a host of cares arising from inordinate affections, and from absorbing self-interest, which drag down the soul to earth and prevent its progress. Through these it becomes restless and discontented, and seeks for relief in fresh dissipation. By vigilance we are preserved from many temptations, and from the influence of external objects and perverse inclinations. It removes all those things which take us away from God; but to be more effective, it must be exercised in a *peaceful* and

¹ 1 St. Peter v. 8. ² 1 Thess. v. 8.

quiet manner, it must be practised with great firmness and *constancy*, and with a view of seeking God in all things. Let us, then, be faithful and earnest in our daily examens of conscience.

2. The motives which should induce us to this watchfulness are: firstly, that thereby we shall be freed from the agitation and effusion on external things which are inconsistent with the peace which is attached to the service of God; also from the troubles which disturb the imagination and the memory, which so frequently assail the mind and heart. Secondly, it promotes and secures the spirit of recollection, by separating us from creatures, and uniting us more closely with God, and by this means preserving us in the supernatural life, and causing us to see God in all things, even in the most common occurrences of life. Surely these are motives enough to induce us to be scrupulously exact to all the industries for making well the general and particular examinations of conscience.

As regards prayer, for us it is the most useful, most important, as most necessary of all our duties. It comprises all others, and on it all others hang and depend. This being so, it ought to be the great *occupation, desire, and strength* of our hearts.

The occupation of our hearts.—In the Scriptures it is wrtten, "With desolation is the earth made desolate, because there is none who thinketh in *his heart*:"¹ yet the people prayed and offered sacrifices, sang psalms, and performed the prescribed rites and ceremonies. But all these went no further than the outside; they were exterior: whereas real prayer is essentially interior, and derives all its force from the heart from which it springs, and is the conversing and communing of man with God. When it is so, then all goes well with the soul; but if it is not so, it is mere outward show and

¹ Jerem. xii. 11.

hypocrisy, and all must go ill. We shall, it is too true, often find it difficult; we shall be attacked by distractions, weighed down by aridity and desolation, and the enemy of our human nature will endeavour by all means to divert us from it by temptations against faith and hope and charity. But after all we can turn these, by the grace of God, into means of enhancing the value and merit of our prayer if we pray from the heart. How do we stand in this respect?

It must be the desire and wish of our hearts. When we go to pray it is no less an insult to God than a discredit to ourselves to present ourselves before His Divine Majesty without having any desire or wish of our heart to put before Him. It is to obviate this that St. Ignatius bids us at the beginning of each of the exercises to beg *id quod volo* what we have really at heart, what we stand in most need of, and what God wants to give to us. Let us ask ourselves where is our heart when we go to pray? Are we really *viri desideriorum*, men with a wish and a strong desire to obtain His grace to reform our lives and to become daily better? In our difficulties do we earnestly seek for light and help from God? And do we persevere until He hears our prayer?

Lastly, prayer, if properly made, is the strength of our hearts. It enables us to ask, and to ask with importunity; to wait with patience and hope, knowing that at length our petitions will be granted. This confidence is firmly based upon the promises of One who cannot be unfaithful to His promises, and whose power and love are infinite. Let us, then, be faithful and earnest and constant in all spiritual duties.

APPENDIX II.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY FURNISH MATTER FOR
ELECTION AND REFORMATION OF LIFE USEFUL FOR
PRIESTS.

I.—ON HUMILITY.

The priest, if we consider the duties, which he is by his office called upon to discharge, may be truly said to be the continuation of our Blessed Lord's Incarnation, inasmuch as he is consecrated and invested with power by Holy Church, to extend, continue, and apply that sacred mystery to the souls that are entrusted to his charge. Now, in order that he may do this efficiently, it is quite necessary that he be imbued with the spirit of our Incarnate Lord. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,"¹ and again, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus,"² says St. Paul. This spirit and mind of our dear Lord is essentially and diametrically opposed to the spirit of the world: and therefore as the world and those animated by its principles seek after honour, display, distinction, notoriety, and what is termed glory, those who are imbued with the spirit of Christ must fly from all these things, despising what the world esteems, abhorring what the world loves. The spirit of the world is pride, the spirit of Christ is

¹ Romans xiii. 14. ² Philipp. ii. 5.

humility. "He descended from Heaven, clad in the hair-cloth of mortality by which He concealed the royal purple of His Divinity," says one of the Fathers of the Church, or as St. Paul puts it: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross."¹

He not only manifested this humility in His own Person, but required that His disciples should imitate Him in the practice of this virtue, when He said: "Learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart."² Moreover, He impressed upon His Apostles the necessity of this virtue, when He said to them that they were to be humble as children, if they wished to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

I. As it was necessary for the Apostles, so also is it for those who are priests. Owing to the great dignity to which they are raised, to the sacred functions which they are called upon to discharge, to the reverence and precedence which is rightly shown to them, they are exposed to the great danger of taking complacency in the honour and attention paid to them, to look for it, and to resent any failure to show it on the part of others, as if it were due to them personally. Nay, they may be tempted to attach their happiness to the flattery and praise of others, which is often as unmerited and insincere, as it is inconstant and transitory. If we glory at all, let it be in the Lord, and because He is thereby glorified, according to that of St. Paul, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,"³ and let us seek that glory which cometh from the Lord, a glory which is real, constant, and eternal, not heeding that which cometh from men;⁴ but doing all things rightly, disregarding the judgments of men.

¹ Philipp. ii. 7, 8.

² St. Matt. xi. 29.

³ 1 Cor. i. 31.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 21.

II. The priest must show humility in his conversation.

From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh, says our Blessed Lord. Hence we find the children of this world are never tired of speaking of self, of their own sayings and doings; they are perpetually employing the first personal pronoun, except where good breeding has taught them the propriety of repressing it. Self-praise, self-glorification is as pitiful as it is contemptible, whether done openly or concealed under the outward form and expression of self-depreciation. The truly humble man ignores or forgets self, and consequently regards self as beneath notice in his conversation, and therefore avoids all professions of self-abasement as well as any expression of self-laudation or vainglory.

But there is a far more sublime humility in reference to the tongue than that just mentioned.

By the public position occupied by the priest, from the very nature of his duties, and the variety in station, character, and circumstances of the persons with whom he has to deal, it is impossible for him to please or satisfy all, he must offend some. His preaching will displease some, his method of administering sacraments will offend others, his management of the church, of the schools, of the mission, will be unsatisfactory unto many, and his manners or conduct will be disagreeable to not a few. All, or some at least of these will condemn him, will perhaps ridicule him, misrepresent him or keep aloof from him.

In such circumstances the humble priest will take his stand beside his Great Original of whom it is written, *Jesus autem tacebat* in the courts of Caiphas, Pilate, and Herod. "He will triumph by his silence," says St. Ambrose, or as St. Augustine puts it, "by keeping silence he will fight and conquer all his enemies." Oh, the wonderful power of humble silence!

"A wise man will hold his peace till he see opportunity," says Ecclesiasticus; "but he that useth many words shall hurt his own soul."¹

It is by patient and prudent silence that the priest will best disarm his enemies, and triumph over opposition: but this is impossible to the proud, it can only be done by the humble.

III. The priest must also regulate his actions and conduct in a humble spirit.

Not unfrequently the priest is raised above his social position by his exalted office, and enjoys an authority and pre-eminence to which naturally he can lay no claim; he has a power and publicity which he sometimes owes neither to nature nor to any inherent qualities, but simply and solely to his Divine and sacred calling. The results of this will be that unless he cultivate humility, unless he follows in the footsteps of Jesus, he will be tempted to presume too much upon his dignity, to over-estimate his importance, to become imperious, to become over-exacting, and to look down upon others. How many in this way become slaves of ambition, grow discontented, and embittered at their slow promotion, or at seeing others advanced to preferments, whilst, as they fancy, their own merits and superior attainments are overlooked. Hence arise suspicions, complaints, and murmurings against superiors, to the grave scandal of their colleagues, sometimes even of laymen, and the serious loss of their own peace and spiritual progress.

Oh! how happy is the good humble priest who accepts his appointment from his ecclesiastical superior, as from the hands of God, no matter how lowly, poor, disagreeable it may be, and who strives with diligence and zeal to discharge its duties, without aspiring to anything higher.

¹ Ecclus. xx. 7.

But unless we cultivate true humility, it is idle to expect that we shall show it in our lives or conduct.

Now to acquire this solid virtue we must convince ourselves that of ourselves we are nothing, are worth nothing, have nothing but our wretched miseries and sins, but that whatever of good there is in us physical, social, moral, or intellectual, we owe to God: also, that in ourselves there is precious little room for vain-glory, and that there is plenty to fill us with shame and confusion, seeing that notwithstanding the multitude and greatness of the *graces* which we have received, our offences, faults, and negligences are daily accumulating. We may truly say that there is no sin, however grievous, that others have committed which we too should not have perpetrated, unless preserved from it by God's grace. Surely, here is more than enough to keep us in the constant disposition of holy humility.

Let us with these truths before us review our daily lives and conduct.

1. Do we allow our minds to dwell upon self, upon our natural gifts or talents, upon our imaginary deserts, our success in the pulpit, in the confessional, or in society? Do we brood over our wrongs or harsh treatment we receive? Do we repine at being overlooked, or at others being preferred before us, as preachers, confessors, managers of schools, &c.

2. Do we foster desires or thoughts of advancement, of excelling others, or putting them into the shade? Do we go in for show or display, and court the praise and esteem of others? Do we take pleasure in attracting notice, or being made the subject of conversation, under the shallow pretext of God's glory and the advancement of religion?

3. Do we ever betray our childish vanity by speaking of self, either in praise or blame? Do we boast of our

work, labours, or success in the discharge of our priestly duties? When blamed or found fault with, are we ready with excuses, do we resent it, and proceed at once to vindicate ourselves? Are we too sensitive and complain at not being treated with due condescension, respect, or consideration?

4. Do we seek our own glory rather than the glory of God? Or are we depressed or mortified when things do not go as we wish?

5. In which of the "three degrees of humility" of St. Ignatius have we reason to place ourselves? Happy is he who finds himself in the third, for such a one enjoys a paradise on earth.

2.—THE PRIEST'S LIFE IS A LIFE OF LABOUR.

It is not an uncommon idea that a priest's life is one of dignified leisure; that his profession is respectable, combining a pleasant variety of duties with a moderate competence, and free from the worries, sacrifices, and constant labours which are inseparable from other professions. That it may be so to one who is not really called to that sacred office, or if called, does not respond to his vocation, we must admit, for the holiest of things may be abused: but if the priest does his duty conscientiously, his life is one of intense toil and unremitting labour.

1. By his vocation, he is called upon to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls: he is an ambassador of God, "For Christ therefore are we ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us,"¹ sent with His authority,² and in a certain measure representing His

¹ 2 Cor. v. 20.

² St. John xx. 21.

attributes. Now, amongst these Divine attributes, our Blessed Lord mentions that of unremitting activity. "My Father worketh until now; and I work."¹ God is ever manifesting His goodness, His providence, His love, and is ever co-operating in all that exists. So, too, Jesus Christ works in His Mystical Body, aiding, enlightening, teaching, guiding, protecting, consoling, interceding for us with His Father. If, then, we are priests worthy of our vocation we, too, must be constant in labour, and with Christ must say: "My Father worketh until now; and I work." Again, as one of the Fathers has said, *Homo natus ad laborem, ut avis ad volandum*. He has to labour to support his body, to develop his intellectual and moral being: so, too, or rather much more must he labour in the supernatural order, co-operating with grace in his justification, sanctification, in acquiring virtue, in increasing his merits. How much more arduous and constant must these labours be in one called to exercise the office of not only sanctifying himself but others also. For he is the *shepherd* of his flock, and as such must provide his sheep with food, must watch over them, must heal those that are sick, bring back those that have gone astray, give back life to those that are dead.

He is the *teacher* of his people, to instruct them on the way to Heaven, to conduct them all, whether ignorant or learned, poor or rich, weak or strong, on to their eternal home.

He is the "dispenser of the mysteries of God,"² to make them children of God, to heal them, to feed them with Heavenly Food, to provide them with Viaticum for their last journey from time to eternity. He is the workman, of whom there are few, whereas the harvest is very great, I may add, to a good priest overwhelmingly large. Yet unceasing though the labour

¹ St. John v. 17.

² 1 Cor. iv. 1.

is, and full of anxiety, disappointment, and responsibility, it is rewarded by an hourly increase of merit here and of eternal glory hereafter. As one of the Fathers of the Church puts it: *Labor sacerdotis jucundus, sanctus, fructu plenus, omnibus gratus, et Deo amabilis.*

2. But that it may merit all these titles attached to the labour, it must be really *labor sacerdotis*, priestly work.

(a) It must be *orderly* and *methodical*. "By Thy ordinance the day goeth on: for all things serve Thee," says the Psalmist;¹ and St. Paul writes: "But let all things be done decently and according to order,"² and the Wise Man, "But Thou hast ordered all things in measure, number, and weight."³ If our work is to be good, effective, and solid, it must be done with system and order, and not from mere impulse, or as the whim or fancy strike us. It should be regulated by measure, number, and weight: by which we apportion our time and energy according to the importance of the duties which we are called upon to perform, and undertake only so much as we can perform well. How often does it happen that we waste time and care on trifles, or on things which are of minor importance, or which are to our liking, whilst we grudge the time we spend in prayer or in the recitation of Divine Office, or omit other essential duties? How often, again, through imaginary indisposition, or a slight feeling of fatigue, or from inconstancy and impulsiveness of character, do we dispense ourselves from a regular distribution of the hours of the day?

(β) Again, our work should be supernaturalized by great *purity of intention*. Of course, the intention which we make in our morning oblation extends to every thought, word, or action of the day, as long as it is not explicitly withdrawn or at least virtually destroyed by

¹ Psalm cxviii 91.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

³ Wisdom xi. 21.

mortal sin, which may God avert! but still the more frequently this offering is renewed the greater will ordinarily be the merit. Yet lest the mind should grow wearied, or lest it might interfere with our work, it may be well to confine the renewal to the chief duties of the day.

Let us remember that we are not labouring for time, but for eternity; not for man, but for God; for our own and our neighbour's salvation; not for an earthly, but a heavenly reward; for God's greater glory, through love for Jesus, and in a spirit of loyalty to Him.

(γ) Again, we should perform all our duties in a spirit of diligence and humility.

The Spirit of God counsels us, saying: "Let the fear of the Lord be with you, and do all things with diligence,"¹ and again, it is written, "For he that feareth God neglecteth nothing."² When we reflect upon the nature of our employments, which does not concern things material and temporal, but those which are spiritual and eternal; a work in which we are directly co-operating with God, in the greatest and holiest of works, we must see how criminal would be any negligence on our part. Let us, then, employ all the energies of our body and soul to acquit ourselves of our priestly functions as if the whole success of them depended purely upon our own efforts, whilst at the same time we must place all our confidence and trust in God and in His help, knowing that without it, all our labours would be in vain. "So you also when you have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done only that which we ought to do."³ We must labour in the planting and watering, but we must never forget that it is God who giveth the increase.⁴ This absolute

¹ 2 Paral. xix. 7.

² Eccles. vii. 19.

³ St. Luke xvii. 10.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 6.

confidence in God's help is based upon His fidelity, for as the Apostle tells us that He is faithful by whom we are called to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord:¹ for otherwise our efforts would be vain. Of what avail would be our preaching, our guidance of souls, our talents for organization, if it were not for God, who moves and influences the heart, if, notwithstanding our many sins, faults, and negligences, He did not choose to make use of us as the instruments and channels of His graces to those over whom He has placed us? Let us, then, resolve to apply ourselves with all diligence to perform each of our duties as perfectly as we can, whether it be preaching, catechizing, instructing, saying Mass, or reciting the Divine Office, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick or poor sinners: but in all these let us never forget that *servi inutiles sumus*.

This diligence must be especially exercised in keeping up the knowledge of sacred learning: for the priest is the custodian of the Divine teaching, and in this capacity he has to instruct not only children, but also those more advanced in years, amongst whom there are not unfrequently persons of sound judgment and of liberal education. He has also, in his character of interpreter of the Divine law, to explain the genuine meaning and practical application of this law, and to adapt it to the circumstances and conditions of his people; moreover, as dispenser of the sacraments, he must be familiar with all that concerns the right administration of them: namely, the effects of each as designed by Christ in their institution, the dispositions of those on whom they are to be conferred, the conditions on which their validity and legality depend. For all this, it is necessary that the priest should constantly apply himself diligently to serious study, ne

¹ 1 Cor. i. 9.

should he rest content with having passed his examinations previous to his ordination. What should we say of a doctor or lawyer who after qualifying for their profession ceased to apply themselves to acquire any further knowledge?

We are told that "the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth;"¹ and the people were instructed "to ask the priests the law;"² and again, it is written, "My people have been silent, because they had no knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to Me."³ From all these passages we see what is the will of God as regards the knowledge of His priests, and consequently what is the diligence which He requires of us.

3.—THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

Point 1.—Let us reflect on the excellence of the priesthood. It is a most holy and sublime state, in which a creature, by his nature weak and frail and full of many miseries, is called by God to a participation in the priesthood of Christ our Lord. Now, this priesthood of Christ was so sublime that it required in Him the Hypostatic Union, so that He should be not only Man but also God; whilst the Victim which He offered was no other than Himself, namely, His own Body and Blood, sanctified by its union with His Divine Person, for the reconciliation of the whole world with His Eternal Father. But our priesthood is no other than a participation in that of Christ, by which we are made His vicars to offer the same Sacrifice, as His substitutes and in His Name. Moreover, in a wide

¹ Malach. ii. 7.

² Aggeus ii. 12.

³ Osee iv. 6.

sense we may be said to share His office of Redeemer, inasmuch as we confer and apply the price which He paid for the redemption of mankind to the soul rightly disposed to receive it. And therefore we see that as it is far more excellent, more wonderful, and more divine, to absolve from sin, reconcile souls to God, and to consecrate the Eucharist, than to rule over all earthly monarchs and to have absolute disposal over all their possessions, we may form some faint idea of the sublime dignity of the Catholic priesthood.¹

Point 2.—The two chief functions of the priesthood in the New Law are: (1) the remission of sin and thereby imparting sanctification to the soul; (2) the offering in Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.

As regards the former, it is true that God alone by His own authority can remit sin, but He has delegated this power to the priests of His Church,² a power not communicated to His angels, nor patriarchs, nor even to His ever-Blessed Mother; a power so sublime that, in one point of view, it may be said with truth that the justification of a sinner is a work of greater excellence than the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.³

As regards the latter, what can be conceived more sublime or wonderful than that a creature should by a word be able to change the substance of bread and of wine into the Body and Blood of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself.

Point 3.—What should be the purity of him who is consecrated to perform such stupendous duties? It is a maxim admitted by all, that things holy demand holiness in him who has to perform them, and that the sanctity of the minister should be proportionate to the holiness of his office. How pure then, how just and

¹ Lessius, *De Antichristo*, d. vii. § 24.

² St. Matt. xviii. 18; St. John xx. 23.

³ St. Augustine, tr. 72, in Joan.; St. Thomas, 1a 2æ, q. cxiii. a. 9.

holy should be he who is called to cleanse the souls of others, how spotless should be the hands which touch the Sacred Body of our Blessed Lord, how innocent the tongue upon which He daily reclines !

How conformed to Christ should he be, who in His place has to offer daily the Holy Sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. Conscious of his high vocation, the priest should rise above the consideration and the love of earthly things, and his conversation should be in Heaven,¹ seeing that he is admitted daily into the awe-inspiring presence of and intimate union with the King of Heaven.

Let us examine ourselves and see how far we have realized the nature of our vocation, and its sacred and solemn duties and obligations.² What is our appreciation of the various functions of the holy ministry? What care do we take to discharge them perfectly for the edification of our neighbour and for the glory of our God ?

Let us ponder those words of St. Augustine :³ " As in this world there is nothing holier, nothing more exalted than a priest who administers in the way which Christ enjoins, so there is nothing in God's sight more sad, more pitiful, more fearful and terrible, than one who performs his office in a perfunctory and merely human manner."

End with an act of sorrow for past faults and a firm resolution to correct what is defective. " Our Father."

¹ Philipp. iii. 20.

² Hebrews vii. 26.

³ Epist. 118.

4.—REPETITION OF THE SAME.

The sublimity of the priesthood, says St. John Chrysostom,¹ is so great, that its members are exalted above the Thrones and Virtues in Heaven. Of the truth of this we may form some idea by considering it in itself, in its author, and in its object.

Point 1.—Even amongst pagan nations we find that priests were always regarded with awe, and were held in great reverence, not only by the people, but also by their chiefs and rulers. Amongst other things calculated to inspire the Jews in the Old Law with these feelings, the very robes worn by the priests in the service of the Temple, ornamented with bells and a profusion of precious stones and plates of gold, denoted the sublimity of their high vocation. Yet what was it when compared with that of the priests of the New Law? To estimate this we must consider the nature of the victims which each was called upon to offer. Now, in the Old Law the sacrifices consisted of offerings of the first-fruits, of doves, lambs, goats, and oxen; and of some of these the priests were allowed to partake, whilst others were consumed in holocaust. But what were all these when we compare them with the adorable Sacrifice of the New Law, of which they were but an imperfect figure?² and in which Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is mystically sacrificed upon our altars, and in which His priests and people receive His adorable Flesh and Blood, His Soul and Divinity, and are thereby made one with God Himself.

Point 2.—If we consider the priest as he is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Baptism, we see

¹ *De Sacerdotis.*

² 1 Cor. x. 11.

again the sublimity of his sacred vocation. Great indeed is the dignity of our earthly parents to whom we are indebted for our natural life, as under God they are the condition without which we should never have been, and although this life is short and full of miseries,¹ anxieties, and sorrows, still the law of nature compels us to love and reverence them; but in holy Baptism the priest confers upon us another life, a supernatural and immortal life, and as our parent in the Lord, has also to answer for our souls. He is like one entrusted with the command of a noble vessel bearing a freight of infinite value on a fearful sea, and terrible is his responsibility, as regards the souls which God has confided to his care. He is the co-operator with Jesus Christ in the dispensation of the graces which accrue to us from the Incarnation, and is thereby engaged in a divine work. For as St. Dionysius says, "Of all divine works the most divine is to labour with Christ in the salvation of souls," and in this sense we may say that he is the continuation of the Incarnation of our Lord. He is the teacher, the father, and doctor of God's people in the supernatural order.

Point 3.—The saints have sometimes realized the sublime dignity of the priesthood, and have not hesitated to kiss the prints left by their feet on the ground, and like the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi, have declared that they held it as a duty to show greater reverence to a poor lowly priest than to an angel from Heaven. And with reason, for the privileges, powers, and commission bestowed upon the priest have never been communicated to the angelic spirits. Our Lord has chosen him from amongst men by a special election, *elegit*; has raised him to high pre-eminence, *posuit*; and has commissioned him to go forth as His envoy, *ut eam*—not only with full powers of

¹ Job xiv. 1.

gaol delivery, but also to make friends of God and saints, *ut fructum afferat*. In order that he may do all this more effectually, He imparts to him His secrets,¹ He makes Himself one with him, so that whosoever hears him hears Christ Himself, and whosoever despises him is guilty of contempt of Christ Himself;² nor can any one raise a hand against him with impunity, but incurs the guilt of sacrilege.

Oh, how great is the responsibility of the priest! Raised to such an exalted dignity, favoured with abundant graces which enable him to live in accordance with the exigencies of his vocation and to discharge rightly its several and solemn duties, what a terrible account he will have to render of all those graces and special helps which he has received. Let us pray most earnestly to our Blessed Lady, to our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, and to His Eternal Father, that our faith may be ever increased to understand better the sublimity of this vocation to the priesthood, and also that our wills may be strengthened and inflamed to regulate our lives ever more and more in conformity with our calling.

¹ St. John xv.

² St. Luke x. 16.

5.—THE PRIEST AND THE ALTAR.¹

The highest and most solemn duty of the priest is to offer up the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, which he should strive to do each day. His mind should be ever turned to the altar, to it his heart should cling, from it he ought to draw his life; in the language of holy David, his soul should long and faint for the courts of the Lord.²

We read with what reverence the High Priest in the Old Law approached to the Holy of Holies, with what scrupulous care he performed the prescribed ablutions, clothed himself with the sacred vestments, and fulfilled the minutest ceremonials enjoined by the Law before offering sacrifice. With how much greater reverence and care should the priest in the New Law prepare himself and approach the altar to offer the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass!

To help us to do this, let us seriously ponder the following points.

Point 1.—The Temple of Zorobabel was specially hallowed and sanctified by the Lord;³ it was holy by reason of the holy prayers and sacrifices offered in it, and also because of the many graces and works of

¹ "Quæcumque igitur ad divinissimum hoc sacramentum et ad sacrificium incruentum referuntur, altaria, vasa sacra, sacraque suppellex, si non splendida et pretiosa, saltem nitida, munda et decentia sunt. Nihil lacerum, nihil squalidum, nihil vilioris quam decet pretii, in re sacra facienda sacerdos admittat. Optandum quidem esset missam quotidie ab omnibus sacerdotibus celebrari; sed saltem frequenter ab altari sumant Christum, qui eorum in gratia renovet juventutem, et indicent fidelibus dies et horas quibus missa in ecclesia per hebdomadam celebrabitur," &c. (Synod. Westm. I. decr. xviii.)

² Psalm lxxxiii. 3.

³ 2 Paral. vii. 16.

mercy which the Almighty bestowed on those who paid Him homage and adoration therein. It was further sanctified and blessed by the occasional presence of our dear Lord in person. But what shall we say of our churches? They are far more holy, for upon our altars is made a memorial of all the wonderful works of Christ; they are more holy than the grotto of Bethlehem in which He was born, than the home of Nazareth in which He was conceived and dwelt for so many years, than Calvary on which He was crucified, died, and was buried. In our temples He performs more wonderful works than even He wrought during the days of His mortal life. At the font we are all made children of God, in the tribunal of Penance we have more than the pool of Bethesda, where souls are healed of all diseases and those which are dead are brought to life again, and at the altar we feast on Christ Himself, who becomes our very food. *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine, concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria tua.*

Point 2.—The greatness of the Sacrifice.—It is the greatest and the most pleasing which can be offered to God. In the Mass, God is supremely honoured, the angels are filled with joy, the Church is helped and strengthened, the living are assisted, and the dead find relief.¹ For it is substantially the same as the Sacrifice which was offered upon the Cross. The priest is the same, namely, “our Blessed Lord, the Sanctifier and Cleanser of souls, whose place we as His ministers occupy.”² The action is such as to exceed all human power. He who offers the Sacrifice by the ministry of His priest is the same who offered Himself in sacrifice on the Cross,³ and is the life-giving Victim by whom the world has been reconciled with God the Father; and upon the holy altar the Christ slain reposes.

¹ St. Laurence Justin.

² St. Chrysostom, Hom. lx. *Ad Antioch.*

³ Trent, Sess. xxii. c. 2.

Again, in the Mass infirm and weak elements¹ are supplanted by their antitype, wherein Jesus Christ is a real holocaust, a perfect eucharistic offering and propitiation,² and "with loud cries and tears appeals to His Father, showing Him the Wounds in His hands, feet, and side."³

Point 3.—If it be accepted as a principle that the higher our position in the house of God, and the more sacred the office assigned to us, the greater should be our sanctity and perfection, and the more intimate our communion with Him who is a consuming fire,⁴ the more active and intense should be our love, then what should be the sanctity and love of the priest? For He represents Christ Himself at the altar, and is the instrument of the principal Agent, and supplies hands and tongue while the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost perform the action. The priest stands between God and humanity, says St. Chrysostom,⁵ presenting our petitions to God and bringing down to us the gifts which the Divine Majesty bestows on us. Oh! with what zeal for God's honour and glory should our hearts be inflamed when we hold in our hands Him who sits enthroned on the right hand of His Heavenly Father!⁶ "Oh," cries out St. Augustine, "O sacred and heavenly mystery, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost perform through you (priests)." The same God who rules in Heaven and is upholding and guiding the universe, is held by us in our hands at the altar. "Heaven is amazed at the sight, earth wonders, humanity is awe-stricken, the devil trembles, and angels adore."⁷

With what humility and profound reverence then should we approach to the holy altar. Conscious as

¹ Galat. iv. 9. ² Trent, Sess. xxii. c. 3. ³ St. Laurence Justin, *De Euch.* c. 27.

⁴ Deut. iv. 24. ⁵ Hom. v. in Joan.

⁶ St. Chrysostom, *De Sacerd.* iii. c. 4. ⁷ St. Augustine, in Psalm. tr. x.

we must be of our many sins, offences, and negligences, we might well dread to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, if it were not that our faith teaches us that "He who has called us is faithful," and will give us those graces which are necessary for us to discharge duly the functions of that vocation if we earnestly and practically will it.

Let us seriously examine ourselves on our method of preparation and thanksgiving for Mass, and see what is to be changed and improved in regard of both. Do we adhere strictly to the rubrics for Mass, and offer it with due attention and devotion? Do we avoid all mannerisms, and everything which is calculated to attract attention on the part of those who attend? If we find that we have been faulty, let us be sorry and resolve at once to correct ourselves.

End with "Our Father."

6.—THE PRIEST AND THE PULPIT.¹

Another important duty of the priesthood is to preach.

Point 1.—This is a commission given by Christ Himself, as we read in St. Matt. x. and also St. Mark xvi.

¹ "Quum verbi Dei prædicatio sit unum ex præcipuis Sacerdotis muneribus, indeque magna ex parte salus animarum et sanctificatio dependeant, necesse est ut juvenes sanctum prædicationis exercitium jam in Seminario edoceantur. Attente legant S. Augustini libros, 'de Catechizandis Rudibus,' et 'De Doctrina Christiana,' et instructiones, S. Caroli, ut animus ipsis addatur ad acquirendam majorem pietatem, necnon spiritum orationis et doctrinæ profectum, considerantes qualis Evangelii præco esse debeat, ut felicem sui laboris exitum sperare possit. Evangelii præco semper memor sit præceptorum S. Caroli: 'Elocutionis genus exquisitum ne affectet, fucum omnem fugiat . . . inflata oratione ne utatur, sed gravi. . . . Consideret se piscatorem hominum esse; nervos omnes intendere debet ut animas pereuntium Christo Domino lucrifaciat.'" (Synod. Westm. IV. decr. ix. n. 14.)

And St. Paul¹ teaches that it is by teaching faith is propagated and the service of God is to be secured and promoted. It is for this that our Lord chooses out His ministers, as He tells us, "I have chosen you and placed you that you go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit may remain."² It is the duty of the priest to promote the health and beauty of the Body of Christ in its members, to repel its enemies, and to enable them to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in them. All of which is done by preaching. The pastor who is incompetent to this duty, exposes his people to the danger of being seduced by the countless false systems of science and religion by which they are perpetually assailed. Hence it is necessary, in order to fulfil this obligation, that he should have sufficient learning; in fact, this was made a condition of our ordination. The world expects it of us, as is proved by men of all classes, ages, and conditions coming to us to refresh their souls.

Point 2.—In announcing the Word of God, we must follow the advice of the Synod of Westminster,³ eschewing empty and inflated declamation, which disedifies the faithful and is fatal to the preacher. The Holy Spirit does not stand in need of rhetorical or literary parade.⁴ The style should be adapted to the audience, and we should strive after the sublime simplicity of our Lord Himself. We have not to preach ourselves, which, says St. Chrysostom, is a sacrilege, but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified; nor act the part of a stage-player in the pulpit. Hence, we must avoid all clap-trap, all devices to gain applause, all subjects which are calculated to excite idle curiosity, or which are chosen for the sole purpose of securing a crowd. To do any of these things is not to preach

¹ Romans x.² St. John xv.³ P. 237, decr. 12.⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 5.

Christ, but to turn the Christian pulpit into a platform or stage, and is to barter souls for earthly gain or the gratification of vanity. Will not such preachers find on the Judgment Day that by their discourses they have failed to gain souls, and for themselves have lost Heaven?

Point 3.—For this duty, and to acquit ourselves well in it, we must of necessity make due preparation.¹ This is done *remotely* by great care and fidelity in performing our daily meditation and cultivating union with God; by a diligent study of the Sacred Scriptures, more especially of the New Testament, and of some of the more important Fathers of the Church, *e.g.*, Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom; by renewing our knowledge of dogmatic and pastoral theology. If ever this learning was needed, surely it is in these times, when men's minds are so preoccupied with religious questions, and the laity apply themselves to theological and philosophical matters which are among the burning questions of the day.

As regards the *immediate* preparation, we should have solely and primarily in view God's glory and the salvation of souls; and then select accordingly the subject of our discourse. If it is for the morning sermon, we find it in the Epistle or Gospel of the day, which is to be explained, illustrated, and applied to the wants or circumstances of the congregation.² For the evening discourse a larger choice is given, but it should treat of useful instruction and strictly religious matter, which will render our hearers wiser and holier.

Have we excused ourselves from preparing our sermons, either on the ground of want of capacity, or of time, or again on account of the smallness or illiterate condition of our audience, or of the absence of all taste

¹ Leo XIII. Instruction to Preachers:

² Comp. *Catechism of Council of Trent.*

for study? These are vain and idle pretexts, and do not justify us before God; they betray a want of a holy professional ambition and of zeal for souls and for God's glory, and too often are a cloak to hide a love of idleness and dissipation. If there is good-will and a real apostolic spirit to make our dear Lord better known and loved, we shall find that neither capacity fails us, nor the time required both for remote and proximate preparation. We shall give less time to useless excursions, unprofitable feasting, idle visiting, and a thousand other frivolities, and *prudently* divert the moneys spent on them into the purchase of books which promote our professional knowledge.

7.—THE PRIEST IN THE CONFESSIONAL.¹

The work of works in the sacred ministry is in hearing confessions, to which important point all should tend: and all the efforts and preaching of the priest should be directed to draw sinners to the holy tribunal. Our Blessed Lord tells us that He came to call sinners to repentance;² and this is one of the functions confided to every priest when he is ordained.³ Then it is our duty to fit ourselves to discharge it well, and to devote ourselves to it in practice. For this end we may

¹ "Quoniam Spiritus Sancti divisiones multiplices sunt et inscrutabiles, et ad varios perfectionis gradus, alii præ aliis, vocantur fideles, non satis est sacerdotem inter *lepram* et *lepre* scite distinguere posse, quin etiam discernere sciat inter spiritum et spiritum, ne pro spiritu Dei spiritui humano, vel etiam diabolico aurem præbeas, in errorem ductus alios secum in errorem ducat. . . . Debet ergo animarum moderator ascensiones cordis ad Deum, necnon orationis profectus, scientia saltem, etiam si non propria experientia ita agnoscere et callere ut incipientes in via purgativa corroborare valeat, proficientes in via illuminativa dirigere, perfectiores in via unitiva ad altiora manuducere." (Synod. Westm. IV. decr. xii. n. 5.)

² St. Luke v. 32.

³ *Rit. Rom.*

make it the subject of our consideration and of self-examination.

Point 1.—The excellence of this Institution.—This is clear, first from the fact that its Author is no other than Jesus Christ. Again, in it He manifests His infinite *love* and *mercy*, in thus providing us with the easiest means of gaining forgiveness of our sins, no matter how many and grievous, and of recovering His love and friendship, which by them we had forfeited. By it we are healed of all the sicknesses and diseases of our souls in the pool of His Most Precious Blood, and if dead and buried in the corruption of sin, we are raised up and restored to the life of grace, and from being the slaves of the devil and liable to eternal perdition, we are reinstated as the children of God and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thirdly, in it we see displayed the *power* of our Blessed Lord. For He empowers man to exercise an attribute which belongs to God alone, not indeed of healing the body or of restoring its natural life, but what is infinitely more, of curing the countless diseases of the soul, which is a work demanding greater power than the creation of the universe, a power of binding and loosing.¹

Point 2.—In the holy tribunal the priest is at once the doctor, the judge, and the father of the penitent.

As *doctor* he has to diagnose the complicated diseases of the soul; and for this he must be well acquainted with and ready in his moral theology, which involves a continual study, as it is a science vast and complicated, and full of positive legislation.² He should be careful to select those authors whose opinions savour neither of rigorism on the one hand nor of undue laxity on the

¹ St. John xx. 23.

² Comp. Liguori, vi. tr. iv. n. 628; Synod. Westm. decr. xxiv.

other, such as St. Alphonsus Liguori, whereby he will avoid alienating some from the sacrament, or rendering others negligent in its use, and making it either odious or comparatively useless.¹ Like a prudent and skilled physician, he must point out the dangers and remedies of the spiritual diseases of those who apply to him, and adapt himself carefully to their dispositions.

He is also a *judge*, and as such must "judge according to justice,"² but must temper his judgments with love, compassion, and mercy: remembering that he is the delegate of Him who loves sinners, who came to call them to repentance, and whose dying words were a prayer for their forgiveness, and who is more anxious to grant pardon than is the penitent to receive it. Alas! how little do they know of whose spirit they are who rebuke bitterly and reproach their penitents, and by their harshness and irritability drive them away from the tribunal and render confession odious to them, forgetting that saying of our Lord, "For with what judgment you judge you shall be judged."³

Lastly, the confessor is also a *father*. As such he is to be ever ready to receive his penitents. He must welcome them with tenderness, compassion, and love, imitating in this respect the father of the prodigal mentioned by St. Luke,⁴ whose example he should ever have before him; or the good shepherd who after long and weary search found his lost sheep, and gently placing it on his shoulders, took it back to the fold rejoicing. How much indifference and neglect of the sacraments may be traced to confessors who forget their duties in the tribunal of Penance, and are negligent in the administration of it!

Point 3.—Let us examine ourselves and see how we have fulfilled this office. Do we show great readiness

¹ Gousset, ii. 547.

² Levit. xix. 15.

³ St. Matt. vii. 2.

⁴ St. Luke xv.

when called upon to hear confessions, no matter how distasteful it may be? Are we punctual as regards the appointed hours for confessions? Do we show harshness or impatience in the confessional, either in word or in manner? Do we hurry through the confession, or detain our penitents in conversation which is foreign to the subject? Are we anxious to attract a large number of penitents, and especially of any particular class? Do we feel hurt or aggrieved if penitents leave us and go to others? If we find upon examination that we have failed in any of these points, let us make an act of sincere sorrow and resolve to amend for the future.

End with "Our Father."

8.—THE PRIEST AT HOME. (1.)¹

An important subject for frequent consideration is the proper employment of our time when not engaged in external duties of the sacred ministry, and in what manner we spend it. To aid us in this matter we may make use of the following points.

Point 1.—The great value we ought to attach to our time.—Our time is the duration of existence assigned to each of us by God to carry out His will and to accomplish our individual destiny. How limited it is, God has declared by His inspired writers as well as by Himself,

¹ "Presbyteria sint ubique vera pacis et caritatis, sobrietatis et modestiæ domicilia; in omnibus fideli populo insigne exemplar 'ut is qui ex adverso est vereatur, nihil habens malum dicere de nobis.' Simplex ibi splendeat mundities; neque in supellectili, neve in ornatu, aliquid luxuræ vel mundanis affectibus inserviens deprehendatur. Regularitas in omnibus fideliter observetur. Ad horam fixam missam celebret sacerdos. . . . Custodite ordinem, et ordo vos custodiet." (Synod. Westm. IV. decr. xi.)

in the sacred writings: and our own daily experience convinces us of the same truth. In fact, our path lies through a valley of death, and we see it on every side of us. Nay, this truth so constantly confronts us, that it has almost ceased to affect us. The result of this is that we fail to attach a due value to our time, and regard the right use or the abuse of it as of comparatively little moment, although both reason and revelation inculcate its supreme importance.

By His Birth, Life, Passion, and Death our Lord purchased all graces for us, and each grace has been paid for by His Precious Blood. Now, amongst these graces by no means the least is our time, by the right use of which we may secure an ever-increasing weight of glory for eternity, may recover God's friendship and love, and by His grace, which is never wanting, may ever conform ourselves more perfectly to the likeness of His well-beloved Son. On the other hand, by the waste or abuse of our time, we throw away or pervert this grace, and thus in a certain sense we render void or squander the Precious Blood of Christ. If it is a terrible fact that we shall have to answer for every idle word, how great reason have we to dread the account we shall have to render of the loss or abuse of so much of our time!

Point 2.—How, then, is it to be employed? We have seen that we are called upon to preach, to hear confessions, to visit our flock that we may know them, and that we may by them be known, to supervise our schools, to direct various confraternities which others, or we ourselves, may have established; to visit the sick, and administer the sacraments to the sick and dying. Now, to fulfil these duties efficiently and in an orderly manner we must prepare ourselves *at home* by prayer, application, and study. A good, zealous, and earnest priest can, if he will, find abundant time for these neces-

sary duties, with great advantage to the performance of his external employments. And—

First, as regards *prayer*: he will be scrupulously exact in his daily morning meditation,¹ regarding it as a most important duty, and quite necessary to keep alive the evangelical spirit: he will recite his Breviary attentively, devoutly, and in due time, in which duty he acts as the envoy of the Church to its invisible Head: and to these prayers he should add the Rosary of our Lady and other daily devotions which his own judgment and piety will suggest for a blessing and help for himself and for the people entrusted to his care.

Secondly, as regards *study*. This is in our days a simple necessity, when men in every station of life are devoting themselves to study and to the pursuit of learning; when all are acquiring the power of reading, and in our cities, towns, and villages libraries are being formed and thrown open for the free admission of the public: when labourers, artisans, shopmen, and clerks all take advantage of these and other means of acquiring knowledge after their long hours of labour. Truly now-a-days knowledge is power, and consequently if we mean to maintain our position and to exercise a due influence and advance the interests of religion, we must possess it; and this is hopeless without study. Not that the priest must devote himself to science; for he is not expected to be a specialist in chemistry, astronomy, geology, or other physical sciences, nor to excel in a knowledge of literature or art; but at least he ought and can apply himself to those studies which are peculiar to his profession, and in these at least he is rightly expected to be a specialist. It is a mistake to suppose that after his ordination he need only trust to "common sense," as it is called, and shut up his books on moral theology, and rely upon his fluency of speech

¹ Synod. Westm. decr. xxiv. p. 31.

to dole out moral platitudes on Sundays by way of preaching. Through life he must renew his knowledge, just as the lawyer thumbs his law books, or the physician his books of medicine, or he will fail signally in his duty both in the pulpit and the confessional. If we are not familiar with our moral theology, our direction of souls will be at least doubtful or hazardous, and without a fair acquaintance with dogma we shall not give proper instruction to the people, but our sermons will cause only weariness and disgust by our constant repetitions of the same moral platitudes, or by incessant appeals for money, which disedify our audience, and too often only produce the effect of making them close their purses.

Again, the priest who has care of souls should carefully and with reverence read the Holy Scriptures, and have at hand some one good commentator on them, thereby to enable himself to answer the difficulties which in our days common labourers urge against them. All this is become now a necessity if we mean to uphold the credit of the sacred ministry, nor is time or expense for books more than a really zealous priest can afford, as one's own experience will abundantly prove.

Point 3.—Let us examine ourselves and see what importance we attach to our time. Do we husband it with great care? Have we a fixed distribution of it,¹ by which so much time is saved, and self-conquest is constantly exercised? Have we not much to correct in the discharge of our spiritual duties, in meditation, recitation of the Divine Office, and in our other daily devotions? How much of our time is wasted in *nihil agendo, male agendo, aliud agendo*? Have we squandered our small means in superfluties, in journeys, in unprofitable amusements, instead of employing it usefully in the purchase of such books as may furnish us with the

¹ Psalm cxviii. 91.

necessary learning of our state, and which now can be bought at such moderate cost? If we find that there is much to be corrected on any of these points, let us resolve to put our hands to the work without delay, and let us say with the Psalmist, "Now I have said it, now I have begun, this is the change of the right hand of the most High."¹

9.—THE PRIEST AT HOME. (2.)

We read in the book of the *Imitation of Christ*: "Your cell, if you are often there, grows sweet to you; if you but rarely stay in it, it makes you loathe it."² But that a priest may love his home, and consequently may abide in it as far as is consistent with the due discharge of his ministerial duties, may diminish the danger of wasting time, and may regulate his life holily, profitably, and pleasantly, he should be specially careful on three points: namely, that his house be kept clean, that it be orderly, and arranged with due simplicity. In this respect, as in all others, the priest ought to serve as a model to his congregation.

1. And first as to cleanliness. This is not only of great importance for the health of the body according to the judgment of medical men, but it is conducive to the edification of the people, who regard the cleanliness of the dwelling as a reflection of the cleanness of the soul of him who inhabits it. The presbytery may be small, inconvenient, and lowly, but that is no excuse for its being dirty. Experience shows that neglect of cleanliness in the priest's house is always accompanied by dirt and neglect in the church and in all that relates to the sanctuary and the administration of the sacraments, which is unpardonable in a minister of Christ.

¹ Psalm lxxvi. 11.

² *Imitation*, i. cxx. § 5.

2. In the second place: in the dwelling all should be in order. On this St. Augustine lays great stress, for he declares, "Order leads us to God." Whilst St. Bernard counsels his Religious, *Custodite ordinem et ordo vos custodiet*—and the Wise Man speaks of God as "the sweet disposer of all things."¹ To some order and regularity are so natural, that the absence of it causes them unrest and a kind of physical pain, whilst to others it presents such difficulty that to secure it calls for the constant exercise of mortification and self-conquest.

One great advantage accruing from this order is the saving of time. It is incredible with what promptitude, and how pleasantly and happily a priest can expedite his work, great and varied as it is, if all is conducted with order and regularity.

This order supposes that everything is kept in its proper place from the cooking utensils in the kitchen to the papers in the study, and the books which perhaps constitute but a small library. It should extend to the hours of rising and of retiring to rest, to the time of meals, and to the various other duties that have to be performed at home.

3. The whole house should be marked with moderation and simplicity. The author of the Book of Proverbs puts into the mouth of the Wise Man the prayer: "Two things I have asked of Thee, deny them not to me before I die: remove from me vanity and lying words: give me neither beggary nor riches, give me only the necessaries of life."² By the Diocesan Statutes, it is decreed that all that savours of luxury or worldliness, whether in the furniture of the house, or arrangements for board or lodging, is to be avoided, as also all extremes of niggardliness or extravagance, as contrary to the true ecclesiastical spirit. It is further

¹ Wisdom viii. 1.

² Proverbs xxx. 7, 8.

recommended that great moderation and simplicity be observed in furniture, ornaments, and decorations, also in dress and in the providing of the table; that all expenditure be accommodated to the revenue, so that after paying bills regularly, something should be reserved for the relief of those in distress; finally, I would add that the house should be so provided with conveniences, as to be made pleasant and attractive to return to from one's external duties and labours. This, however, by no means supposes that rooms whether for public or private use be supplied with superfluities or presents from friends or others, which are more suited to a lady's boudoir or a gentleman's studio, than to a poor priest's chamber or study. If there be any prodigality, it should show itself in one thing only, namely, in the library, in which should be prominent not many but at least select authors suited to the ecclesiastical state, such as the best commentators on the Sacred Scriptures, the best works on ecclesiastical history, the writings of some of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and of the Theologians, some approved works on Ascetic Theology, and Catechism, Lives of the Saints, &c.

Such books may often now-a-days be purchased at a comparatively trifling cost, and are quite within the reach of the majority of the clergy, though of course only by degrees, not all at once.

4. In regard of visitors, the priest is often called upon to exercise great patience, prudence, charity, and self-denial. If his parishioners wish to take counsel of him, he should be ready to put himself at their service at *once*, though at some inconvenience to himself, receiving them with kindness and affability; nor should he remit them to another time, or cause them to wait unnecessarily.

If they come to lay before him their sorrows or

trials, it is his duty to comfort, guide, and encourage them, inasmuch as he is constituted the father of his flock, and expects them to call him by that title.

With respect to those who come to beg alms, there is need of great prudence and discretion in these times and in this country, seeing that imposture has almost become a science, and moreover that promiscuous charity often does more harm than good, and also that the priest has many calls upon his charity, whereas his means are very limited.

It is true, as St. Peter Chrysologus says, "The poor man's hand deposits in the treasury of Heaven that which it receives on earth, that it may not perish. The hand of the beggar is the treasury of Christ: for whatever it receives, Christ accepts as given to Himself. Give therefore that which is earthly, that thou mayest receive that which is heavenly; give thy money, that thou mayest receive a crown." And our Lord Himself bids us "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."¹ Yet, now-a-days, there is so much deceit, falsehood, and abuse, that the cause of true charity is better promoted by careful inquiry into the case, either personally or by others, before administering relief.

Sometimes the visitors will be brother priests, or benefactors, or friends. Such should be welcomed with special kindness and amiability, with generous and well-regulated charity, yet not to the detriment of becoming moderation or to the loss of time.

As regards the other sex, the visits should be short and far between; and, as far as possible, it is to be recommended that they should not be private or without witnesses—*ut evitetur lucrum cessans, vel damnum emergens, vel periculum sortis*. Such was the maxim of

¹ St. Luke xvi. 9.

the great St. Francis of Sales. Finally, the priest should be master in his own house, ruling with gentleness and firmness, neither over-indulgent nor despotic.

10.—THE PRIEST IN HIS PARISH.

Our Blessed Lord says in the Parable of the Good Shepherd: "I know My sheep and My sheep know Me;" and again, "Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."¹ From which we may conclude that whoever has care of souls must know his people, and they also must know him, and moreover, that he must go in search of those who have gone astray and are out of the fold, and must endeavour by all means to bring them back to the Church. To stir up our zeal and charity in this respect, it may be well to make use of the following consideration.

Point 1.—In order that the priest may satisfy his duty towards those whose souls are confided to his keeping, one condition is necessary, namely, that he should *know* them. For this purpose it is requisite that he should make himself well acquainted with his people, nor does he satisfy his conscience by staying at home on the principle that if they want him they will come to him; he ought to go and visit them, though when not so employed, he should be found in his house or in church. Such visits are less necessary when it is a question of the rich, or of females who by their education and other circumstances know their duty, and generally do not stand in need of much urging to practise their religion. With such persons

¹ St. John x.

little good is to be done, much time may be wasted, and their friendship is rather flattering to human nature. But a devoted priest will give himself to visiting the poor, to encourage them in their hard and laborious lives, to console them in their sorrows and misfortunes, to sympathize with them in their poverty, and to help them in their distress; to show them the happiness of serving God, and the misery of offending Him and neglecting their religion. If he does this, his presence will be a source of joy, and will act like the bright sunshine, and will dispel the gloom and darkness which broods like a black cloud over their wretched dwellings. He will soothe their anger, appease their quarrels, settle their complaints, and share in their joys. In this way "he will become all things to all men that he may gain all,"¹ and all this he will do for Christ's sake. The rich have friends enough to pay them visits, and consequently hardly appreciate his calls; but it is not so with God's poor, who are grateful for and are flattered and cheered by the visit of God's minister.

The noblest title which a good priest should ambition is that of "Father of the poor." The good priest must be especially diligent in visiting the sick. Any neglect in this respect is calculated to draw down upon a pastor of souls the displeasure of God, and betrays a want of zeal and charity which even in the Old Law was punished by the curse of the Almighty.² He should be able to say with St. Paul: "Who is weak and I am not weak?"³

Point 2.—Our Lord adds in the parable, "And Mine know Me." This the good priest should also verify in himself. Now, it is by his conduct that he will make himself known, and more particularly by his conversation, according to that of St. Matthew: "From the

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 22.

² Ezech. xxxiv. 2.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 29.

abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”¹ In this respect he should take our Blessed Lord for his model. With whom did Jesus converse? Principally with the poor, but yet He made no exception of persons. What were the subjects of His discourses? Mainly on the Kingdom of His Father, of His sweet mercy and forgiveness, of His love and gentle providence. He insisted on the necessity of holy faith and confidence, and on brotherly love. He inculcated the practices of humility and self-denial, of detachment from creatures, and of love of God; but never did He speak of idle, vain, or frivolous matters, never of the faults or defects of others, unless duty required it. If He corrected, it was firmly and with tenderness—His words were stamped with sincerity, ingenuousness, patience, and modesty—and in short, all He said was prompted by a pure intention of His Father’s glory, was marked by the gravity which beseemed His sacred character, and measured by consummate prudence.

Point 3.—Let us examine ourselves on these several points. How do we regulate our visits as to persons, times, and places? Are we actuated by the motive of God’s glory and the good of souls, or by human motives, natural inclinations, and self-interests? Do we waste our time and weary others by prolonging our stay? With the rich are we too obsequious, and sacrifice our principles through human respect? With the poor, especially when they are sick or in trouble, are we assiduous in visiting them to help and cheer them? Do we treat them with gentleness and patience, &c.? In conversation are we cynical, or sarcastic, or do we indulge in ridicule or uncharitableness? Do we disparage others and praise ourselves, or give way to vulgar, frivolous, and worldly conversation?

¹ St. Matt. xii. 34.

11.—THE PRIEST AND THE LIFE OF FAITH.

When we consider the various occupations in the life of one who has the charge of souls, the dangers and difficulties with which it is beset, and the constant self-sacrifice which it demands, we see how necessary it is for him at all times to be actuated by a spirit of faith and of real practical charity. Hence it is well for us to make a consideration upon each of these virtues. And first let us consider the necessity of keeping alive the spirit of faith. *Iustus ex fide vivit*—"The just man liveth by faith."¹

Point 1.—By his office the priest is entitled to the highest respect, as he occupies a position incomparably above that of any or of all of his parishioners together. He is their guide and adviser; to him they have recourse in their trials, doubts, and sorrows, and to him they refer, for it is written: "From them shalt thou learn wisdom."² Now in this there is a real danger, and more particularly in those who from previous environment, or by their natural acquirements, are less prepared for such a position of responsibility and honour.

Again, in discharging his office of preaching, he will often be inclined to forego the labour of preparing his sermons, or through dilatoriness or dissipation will neglect to do so; or, on the other hand, will spend too much time in elaborating his discourses, from motives of vanity and love of display, not considering what will be of benefit to the souls of his hearers, but what will make their ears tingle and evoke praise and admiration, or oftener false flattery; in short, preaching self, but not Jesus Christ. Here again is a great danger. Or

¹ Romans i. 7.² Ecclus. viii. 10.

as a confessor he will often be tempted to impatience and irritability, by which he will frighten or alienate the poor and uneducated, or to compromise for fear of offending the rich. He may be tempted to gather around him a large *clientèle*, and to resent it if any of his penitents leave him to seek spiritual help from another; and he is constantly exposed to respect of persons,¹ which is not according to God's holy will.

If it is a question of visiting his parishioners, human nature will prompt him to visit those who least require it and will profit least by it; and, on the other hand, his natural inclination will often try to deter him from visiting those who stand most in need of it, and to whom it will prove most beneficial, and for whom it may be the means of conversion and of return to the practice of their religion.

Such are some of the difficulties and dangers which beset the life of a priest. His own wayward nature, the special malice of the devil, the enemy of our human nature, and the spirit of the world, all combine against him and spread their nets to entangle him and to frustrate his labours. How can he secure himself against their attacks?

Point 2.—St. Paul describes faith, as “the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not.”² The soul, under the guidance of faith, rises above all things material and of time, sees through their hollowness, and employs itself in things beyond the region of the senses, which nevertheless are more real and of infinitely greater moment. It contemplates its Creator and realizes its relations with Him, as He is a Father who with infinite power and love arranges all for His own greater glory and for the glory and happiness of His children. It loves to dwell always in His holy presence, and directs all its thoughts and

¹ 2 Paral. xix. 7.

² Hebrews xi. 1.

efforts to please Him. It despises all mere earthly things, except in so far as they help it towards that which, though unseen, is the object of its hopes, namely, its heavenly home. It sees in its neighbours not their riches, their talents, or their beauty, but only the objects of God's love—brothers of Jesus Christ purchased by His Precious Blood, and future sharers with itself of a Heavenly Kingdom. It appreciates duly the necessity of serving God and the terrible misery of losing His favour, and therefore it directs every thought, word, and action to promote the former and to avoid the latter not only in itself, but also in the souls of others, at any cost or sacrifice.

Faith surrounds it with a supernatural atmosphere, makes it a participator in the life of God Himself, communicates new light to the understanding and a new strength and energy to the will, causes it to live in close union with Christ Himself, and to say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."¹ It lives in the faith of the Son of God.

"Faith is the evidence of things that appear not." The priest who lives the life of faith regards the souls of his people, considers the awful conditions of their existence, and the greatness of his responsibility in their regard; the terrible consequences to himself and to them of failing to discharge his duties in their regard, as their model, their teacher, their physician, and father. Far will it be from him to recite the Divine Office, or offer up the Holy Sacrifice, or administer the sacraments, in a perfunctory manner and out of mere routine. In all his different duties he will conduct himself as befits the instrument of God, the personal representative of Christ, and the ordained minister and dispenser of the mysteries of God. And in this manner not only does he steer clear through all dangers, but

¹ Galat. ii. 20.

he converts each of his acts into a means for increasing his own sanctification and a fresh step towards the perfection of his state.

Point 3.—What are the means of securing the life of faith? The Prophet Jeremias says: “With desolation is all the earth made desolate, because there is no one that thinketh in his heart.”¹ To secure a life of faith we must “think in our hearts”—that is to say, that our minds must be employed mainly on spiritual things, and our hearts must be guided by the teachings of holy faith, and not by natural inclinations and earthly principles. For this it is necessary that we cultivate interior recollection and union with God; that we foster a spirit of devotion, and that we prove faithful to our daily meditation and our other spiritual duties. Further, it is necessary that we cut off all occasions of dissipation and distraction as far as is possible in our state of life; that we regard life not as a time for pleasure or amusement, but as a most serious and momentous time in which we have to labour and toil and sow the seeds of those virtues which are to grow and ripen into the fruit of eternal life.

Let us examine how we stand with regard to this life of faith. Do we rather live a life of the senses, neglecting those things which are of the spirit? Do we make light of spiritual duties, and of the Divine Office? Do we give way to dissipation of mind and pour ourselves out on external things, and gratify mere natural activity?

In our relations with our neighbours, do we ignore or neglect the interests of their souls, and thus in our dealings with them and in our conversations fail to induce them to study the Life of our Blessed Lord, thereby to know Him better, to love Him more, and strive after a more perfect imitation of Him? If we

¹ Jerem. xii. ix.

find ourselves wanting in regard of these things, let us resolve to correct ourselves, and take those words of St. Paul for our motto: *Iustus autem meus ex fide vivit.*

12.—THE CHARITY OF THE PRIEST.

The self-sacrifice in the discharge of his duties required in a priest can only be secured by constant efforts on his part to attain the perfection of holy charity. This is the atmosphere which he must breathe, by this motive must he be actuated in all that he does. The nature of his work requires it, and it is called for by the class of those amongst whom he has to labour.

Let us weigh seriously the following considerations.

Point 1.—The excellence and importance of this virtue.—

This is shown by innumerable passages of the Sacred Scriptures. Thus St. Matthew,¹ St. Mark,² St. John,³ announce it as the commandment of God, a new commandment which our Lord claims in a special manner as His own. The Beloved Disciple in his first Epistle, in six different places, exhorts us to practise this virtue, because Christ our Lord commands it, and because He has loved us, and also because it is a condition of supernatural life. Again, according to the Sacred Text, it is by this virtue that Christ's disciples are to be known, by it also that we discharge the debt that we owe to the brethren;⁴ by this virtue we fulfil the law and are in the enjoyment of the light.

On the other hand, if we have not charity we are in death, we are of no avail and nothing worth. In all

¹ St. Matt. v. and ix.

² St. Mark xii.

³ St. John xiii.—xv.

⁴ Romans xiii.

these ways does the Spirit of God impress upon us the excellence and importance that we are to assign to the practice of this virtue. Nay, He seems to insist upon it even more than upon the love of Himself; and lays it down as the test by which the reality and perfection of our love for Him is to be proved. To encourage us to reduce it to practice, He tells us that "whatever ye do to the least of these My brethren, ye do for Me,"¹ even if it be only a cup of cold water, and moreover that it shall not go unrewarded. Surely God Himself could not prove to us more forcibly how excellent is this virtue and how pleasing it is in His sight.

And with reason, for as He Himself declares, He loves each of us with an everlasting love, He has bought us with an infinite price² with His own Precious Blood, and has called us that hereafter we may share His glory for all eternity.

Point 2.—The end of the priesthood, that for which it has been instituted, the powers with which it has been invested, are all directed to procure the salyation of souls. In this respect the priest may be said to be the continuation, expansion, and application of the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord Himself. By Baptism, he confers upon the child the life of grace, makes it a brother of Christ, and introduces it into the family of God; by Penance, he restores to the soul the life which it had lost by grievous sin; by the Holy Eucharist, he supplies it with that Food which the angels ever adore, but of which they may never partake, namely, the Body, the Blood, the Soul and Divinity of Christ Himself; by the last anointing, he speeds the poor soul on its way from time into eternity, and supplies it with strength for its final step; by his preaching, he teaches the science of salvation, withdraws souls from danger, evil, and death, and stimulates

¹ St. Matt. x. 42.

² 1 Cor. vi. 20.

them to do good. He is to go in search of those who have strayed away from the fold and bring them back again. Like his grand original, he will often have to sit down by the roadside weary after his long search, and as the Apostle must be able to say, "I will spend and be spent myself for souls,"¹ and often, too, in discharge of his duty will have to brave death in administering the rites of the Church to the fever-stricken victim.

But unless he be animated by the spirit of true charity, this is impossible. He may indeed perform one or other of these duties for a time through natural motives, as natural kindness, a spirit of novelty, natural activity, or vanity, but it will only be by fits and starts and will not be lasting, nor will it extend to all alike without exception of persons, whether rich or poor, old or young; nor will it be patient and kind, bearing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things.²

Point 3.—The necessity of this charity becomes more evident when we reflect upon the persons towards whom it is to be exercised. The number of gentle and refined persons in our congregations is exceedingly limited, and these stand least in need of the charity of the priest. His main work lies amongst the poor, who dwell in the midst of squalor, whose manners are often rude, forbidding, and repulsive, who are vulgar and uneducated, and often are prejudiced and mistrustful. Some are unwilling to receive the priest, others are full of imaginary grievances, murmurings, and complainings; others again are obstinate and refuse his ministrations, and will not listen to his exhortations or consent to abandon their evil ways, and to frequent the church and the sacraments. And without great charity, who can still persevere in such labours and amid such difficulties?

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 15.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

13.—ON ANXIETY OF MIND.

Anxiety of mind with solicitude about good to be acquired, or evil to be averted, often fills the soul with trouble and tumultuous cares, and is opposed to Christian prudence. It often, if assented to, produces sleeplessness, emaciation, diffidence in the loving providence of God, and a want of energy in His service. Sometimes it is caused by the memory of things that are passed; sometimes by unfounded alarms about the present, or about the unknown future; against which our Lord warns us when He says: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," as if He would say, Have heed of your cares as they come with each day, but heed not those of the morrow; nor be troubled by asking, "What shall we eat?" or, "Who will roll back the stone for us?" and the like. Such cares are the great enemies of the soul, by disturbing its peace, preventing progress in virtue, and embittering our service of God.

Point 1.—As regards the *past*, how often the memory and imagination succeed in exciting alarms, on the very slightest grounds. If disappointed at not receiving a letter from a friend, there arise fears lest he may be ill, or perhaps offended, or may never have received your news; if he is not punctual in his appointment, we are alarmed lest some accident may have befallen him; if you do not receive to the day the fruits of an investment, you are at once alarmed lest it is the result of fraud or bankruptcy, and so it happens in endless other cases.

What counsel should I give to others in such cases? Your apprehension is either true or false. If false, how foolish and unreasonable it is to be disturbed at

nothing; if true, all your anxiety is unprofitable and cannot change the event—what is done, cannot be undone. Leave it all in God's hands, who has ordered it for the best. It is a useless care which only inflicts pain, but gives no profit. Such is the advice we should give to others; then let us apply it to ourselves. Let us with holy Job say: "The Lord has given; the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." What has happened, was decreed by an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-holy Father, or at least permitted by Him, and consequently may His blessed will be done in me and by me. This is the only means of securing peace as regards those things which concern the past. Again, when at times the sins and faults of the past rise up before the mind and overwhelm us with terrors and doubts lest perhaps they are not forgiven, and that our repentance has not been sincere, we must throw ourselves into the arms of God, and confiding in His infinite love and mercy, reject and despise all idle alarms, and with the Psalmist we must say: "In Thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed."

Point 2.—As regards cares about the *present*, we must, as St. Ignatius teaches, "accommodate ourselves to things, and not things to ourselves." If a sailor sees a rock in his course, he does not wait till it is removed, but changes his course and sails by it. There are some who want to do all themselves, and will leave nothing to others, and stubbornly persist until they learn by sad experience that their sphere of activity is limited, and render themselves useless and incapable of all serious labour. To be over-occupied is as pernicious as to have too little to do; and both end by shrinking into idleness. The body can bear labour, but the mind is exhausted by cares, and solid devotion is exposed to great risk in a crowd of duties as in a crowd of

persons, and by degrees will die out, unless we so accommodate ourselves to things as not to interrupt the union of our hearts with God, our memory ever recalling His sacred presence, our will now invoking Him, now praising Him, now making declarations of love of Him. We thus avoid the faults of Martha, who was "troubled about many things," by giving ourselves to the occupation of Mary.

Let us then consider what our shoulders can bear, and what they refuse to carry; and let us seriously determine how much of our time to devote to necessary business, and how much to matters of choice; how much to employ in helping others, and above all how much is to be consecrated to prayer, and must not be interfered with unless for some occupation more pleasing to God or more profitable to the souls of others. Then the multitude of our cares will not disturb our souls, our duties of necessity will be performed with tranquillity and without bustle, and other things of supererogation will not be neglected if time permits.

Point 3.—The anxieties and cares about the *future*, however, are far more injurious to the soul than either those of the past or of the present; and betray a want of confidence and trust in the goodness and providence of God. How many embitter their lives, and drag on a hopeless existence, because they neglect living in the present, and are absorbed in the anticipation of evils which their imagination conjures up from the dark womb of the future! Instead of praising and thanking God for the graces and blessings which He is bestowing upon them, they are a prey to fears which will never be realized, such as loss of friends, or of fortune, failure of undertakings or of health, or are preoccupied with apprehensions of public or private misfortunes, &c. Even good and holy people are too often tempted in

this way, but when attacked they know how to resist, and feeling that they are in the hands of Him who "hath care of them," and who will not suffer them to be tried above their strength, they abandon themselves to the protection of their Heavenly Father, who has both the power and the will to help them. With St. Paul they say, "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him." They have no anxiety lest the means of support may fail them. The Lord will provide—they care not if malicious tongues calumniate them, and "enemies stand together against them," they still are confident, for they know the Lord will provide. To them it matters not if sickness or death may be looming in the future, they are at peace, and with holy David they sing: "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Anxiety finds no place in the soul that has given itself to God, and is imbued with the spirit impressed upon us in the contemplation of "Two Standards" and the third degree of humility.

Therefore, my soul, "cast thy care upon the Lord," be not solicitous about yesterday, to-day, nor to-morrow. The first is useless, the second imprudent, the third is an injury to the providence of God. All anxiety ill beseems a Christian, much more a Religious or a priest. Let my care be to fulfil each day and hour the will of my Father in Heaven, to observe His counsels and precepts, and He will not fail to take care of me and of mine.

Let us end with the words of St. Bernard: "Why dost thou trouble thyself, and why art thou afraid? Behold the Angel of the Great Counsel invites thee, than whom there is no one stronger, no one more loyal and true, no one wiser."

14.—ON PATIENCE.

Patience is a virtue which enables us to bear contentedly and with resignation the ills of life. In considering this virtue we must distinguish between our interior *feelings* and the *consent* to or *encouragement* of them. The former are not completely under our control and are often involuntary, and as such are not sinful; but only become so when we deliberately foster feelings of discontent and give way to them by murmuring and repining, and by acts of impatience. It is a virtue necessary for all, and its exercise is called for perpetually. "The days of man are short, and his life is full of many miseries," says holy Job, and our experience convinces us of this truth. Persecution, quarrels, affronts, sickness, loss of goods or of friends, breaches of trust or of confidence, all supply abundant occasions for its exercise. To these we may add the many annoyances and inconveniences attached to our duties and state of life, or which arise from those amongst whom circumstances compel us to live and with whom we have to associate. That we may draw some practical fruit from this consideration, let us examine in what manner we exercise the virtue of patience in regard of those inconveniences and trials which are attached, (1) to the place in which we live, (2) to the time, and (3) to our state.

Point 1.—If we are by our office or state fixed in a special *locality*, we are tied to a certain climate, to a certain class of companions, and ordinarily are subject to a fixed Superior. Thus it may be that the air does not suit us—it is too damp or too keen, too relaxing or too bracing, too dense or too rare. All this we could

bear when young, but age makes us very sensitive to weather. Again, the *persons* amongst whom we are thrown are hard, quarrelsome, haughty, rude, unkind, and unsympathetic. As regards *Superiors*, they are prejudiced, choleric, disobliging, too ready to find fault and reprehend. They select the least deserving as their friends and confidants and advisers, and leave us studiously alone.

If we are in *Religion*, other trials of patience present themselves. Our cubicle is either too large or too small, or is too hot or too cold, or too noisy. The food and accommodation are not up to the mark, domestics are disobliging, and in short there is an absence of many conveniences which we find in other houses of the same Order. Such are some of the many sources of impatience to which we may be subjected; and we often are inclined to think that we should escape them by change of domicile.

Let us remember those words of à Kempis: *Imaginatio et locorum mutatio multos fefellit*; and again: "It is necessary for thee, wherever thou art, to practise patience, if thou wilt enjoy interior peace, and merit an everlasting crown."

None of these things, nor all of them together, can harm us, says Chrysostom, unless we harm ourselves. Give thanks to God for them, and this will convert them to our profit and advantage. Moreover, have we not promised our dear Lord to aim at the third degree of humility, and begged of Him to accept us to fight under His standard? and is it by murmuring and impatience under these trials that we fulfil our engagements? Let us contrast our crosses with those of our Jesus at Nazareth and our patience with His, and blush for shame.

Point 2.—The second source of trials of patience springs from *time*. We are content to perform the

duties of our state of life or office, but this must be at our convenience and at our own time; but if obedience or charity should require it otherwise, what then? To be called upon in wet and stormy weather to make a journey on foot to some sick person, to be roused from sleep to go and assist the dying, to be interrupted in our prayers or studies in order to perform some parish duty; to be required to leave table or recreation or some pleasant company in the interest of charity; to endure hunger, sweat, fatigue, heat, or cold, when they may be all avoided by *inexcusable* delay until another time, is not to practise patience and self-denial, but is rather to prove ourselves cowards in God's service and slaves of self-indulgence. It is not to be masters of time, but rather to make time our master. Let us learn a lesson from the children of this world, who are "wiser in their generation than the children of light." What does the soldier do in the pursuit of glory? How readily he braves the heat and cold and tempest! how cheerfully he foregoes food and sleep, and sacrifices health. So, too, the merchant in the attainment of wealth; and the sportsman in hunting his prey! How readily do they expose themselves to every kind of trial and inconvenience, and what indomitable patience do they not display in the effort to attain their desired end. Let us not delude ourselves that we have attained the virtue of patience, until we sacrifice our own comforts and bear those inconveniences which daily fall to our lot, and let us follow the example of our Blessed Lord, who considered every time convenient in which an occasion presented itself of doing a *greater good*, and would have us forego any convenience or expose ourselves to any hardship when the greater glory of His Father or the salvation of our neighbour requires it.

Point 3.—Many trials of patience are inherent in our

office or *state of life*. No matter how honourable the office or how privileged the state of life, it must have its disadvantages as well as its emoluments, its trials as well as its pleasures; and whoever would choose one or the other, must be content to accept the bitter with the sweet, the gains and profits with the drawbacks. The office is not created to subserve the man, but man the office; so, too, the state of life is not to adapt itself to the man, but he is to adapt himself to its requirements.

From this it follows that whoever conscientiously fulfils his duty must meet with many occasions in which his patience must be severely tried. The office of the *priest* is beset with them, not only in regard of his parish duties towards his congregation in administering the sacraments, especially of Confession, in preparing and delivering his sermons, in visiting his flock, especially the sick, in urging the negligent and slothful, correcting the wayward; but also in the management and in the control of his schools, and in the instruction of the children and in preparing them for the sacraments.

So, too, is the life of a *Religious*, especially in regard to the duties of obedience and charity. How often is patience tried by the orders of Superiors, when they assign to us the offices of preaching, teaching, giving missions, or positions of authority, for which we feel ourselves unqualified, or when they appoint us to colleges or houses for which we have a repugnance, or in which we feel that our health is imperilled. How often are we inclined to murmur and complain, and what is worse, try to bring the Superior's will to our own, and thereby contrive to transfer the unpleasant burden from our own shoulders to others. Again, in our relations with our religious brethren, how often are we tried by the differences of disposition, character,

and nationality, and by the variety of habits, manners, and customs?

And lastly, too often we are a burden to ourselves amid the various trials which are involved in the observance of regular discipline and approved customs, which are calculated to render us irritable and impatient. Let us keep our eyes fixed upon our Blessed Lord, the model of patience, and remembering the words of St. Paul that patience is necessary and hath a perfect work, let us pursue justice, godliness, charity, and patience, supporting each other with patience in charity.

15.—ON THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

Amongst the many dangers of those engaged in the sacred ministry, by no means the least is that which arises from the *false maxims* and perverse axioms, which are not unfrequently put forward by those whose age and experience should have made them wiser, and who ought to be our models. To counteract this danger, there is no more effective means than an earnest cultivation of the cardinal virtues, on the exercise of which hangs the integrity and virtue of life; for no act can be really just and praiseworthy before God and man which is not characterized by prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Moreover, the exercise of them is constantly required if we mean to make progress in spiritual life, and to acquire perfection and the habit of any special virtue. Wherefore it is well to consider each of these virtues and to see how we stand in regard to it. After placing ourselves in the presence of God and begging light and grace to see what is wanting in us in regard of these virtues, and strength to correct it, we consider:

1. *Prudence*.—This is the virtue by which we judge, in each circumstance of life, what is good that we may adopt it, and what is bad that we may reject it, and by which we direct all to our last end. It involves three things, namely, (*a*) *deliberation*, (*β*) *correct judgment*, and (*γ*) *practical application*.¹

(*a*) *Deliberation* supposes that we subordinate and direct all to our last end, and select the best and surest means to secure it. "My son, do nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done," says Ecclesiasticus. The prudent man weighs the claims and rights of God in his regard, and also his duties towards his fellow-man; he considers how these are to be best satisfied in the circumstance, what difficulties are to be surmounted, what means to be adopted, what prejudices to be removed, what inclinations to be repressed. In case of doubt, he will seek the advice of others, following the counsel of the Spirit of God: "Lean not upon thy own prudence."²

(*β*) *Correct judgment*.—The prudent man does not select at hazard any means for the attainment of the end he has in view, but under the guidance of holy faith, he chooses that which recommends itself as the most sure, the safest, and the most efficacious. He will by this means secure success, will remove all grounds for self-reproach or fretting, and by his foresight will guard against all unforeseen difficulties.

(*γ*) *Practical application*.—True prudence requires, besides counsel and judgment, execution. Often there is great danger in delay, lest by putting off, fresh circumstances may arise which may prove insurmountable. Again, from procrastination springs inconstancy, not unfrequently attended by the loss of influence and authority. We should strike the iron

¹ Comp. St. Thomas, 2a 2ae, q. 50. &c.

² Prov. iii. 5.

while it is hot. When once the mind has shown us our duty, a well-regulated soul will not hesitate to perform it.

Let us examine ourselves and see how we observe this virtue. Do we act from impulse, or on the spur of the moment, influenced by passion or mere feeling, as the animal creation which has no understanding? Do we expose ourselves and forfeit the respect and esteem of others by neglecting to make use of our judgment, and doing things which right reason cannot approve, and which others must reasonably condemn? Do we give way to procrastination and dilatoriness, whereby much good is left undone, time is wasted, and the soul is harassed by self-reproach? If we find that we have erred in regard of this virtue, let us resolve to correct ourselves, and let us bear the axiom in mind: *Dimidium facti, qui bene cœpit, habet.*

2. *Fortitude.*—It is sometimes used to express a necessary quality of all real virtue, namely, firmness of purpose in all that is virtuous and good; but in a more restricted sense, it expresses a state of the soul which disposes it to exercise a firm control over reason and will, in face of all difficulties, and death itself, and to restrain all excess of fear or rashness; and has for its foundation hope in the protection of God.

It prompts a man to do great things for God's sake, and even to ambition occasions of heroism. It inclines him to aim rather at excess in the practice of all virtues, than to be content with mediocrity, and requires the rein rather than the spur. It is deaf to the whisperings of fear, to the countless excuses of poor human nature, by which one would avoid all labour and fatigue, all trouble, anxiety, and mortification; and is unaffected by the promptings of self-love and self-ease. Its maxim is that of St. Paul: "For whether

we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's;"¹ and again: "Let us work whilst it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work."²

Fortitude enables us also to suffer greatly for God. Fewer distinguish themselves by suffering than by their actions, because the latter are often attended by glory, whereas suffering is unseen and unknown, is opposed to our natural inclinations, and is contrary to self-will; and consequently we find fewer heroes on Calvary than on Thabor. But both are a spectacle well pleasing to God and man. The man of fortitude bravely welcomes sufferings and hardships, and trusting in God, will, like St. Ignatius, welcome death by wild beasts, or like St. Laurence will smile on the gridiron.

Let us examine how we stand in regard of this virtue. Are we ready to do great things for God and our neighbour? Do we cheerfully spend our time and strength in promoting their interest? Do we give way to idleness and self-ease and self-indulgence on the ground that age or health require it? Do we fly from pain and suffering, or yield to difficulties or opposition, the sure appanage of the friends of God? Do we give way to cowardice and fear when it is groundless? Or, on the other hand, are we bold to rashness and regardless of the dictates of common sense? Is our fortitude attended by confidence, patience, and perseverance? If anything in this respect is wanting to us, let us with God's grace resolve to correct it.

3. *Justice*.—This virtue is the habitual disposition of will to render to each one what is his due; and it is divided into four species:

(a) By commutative justice, we are bound in inter-

¹ Romans xiv. 8.

² St. John ix. 4.

change of goods to strict equality, unless wholly or in part the compensation is remitted. Between us and God this is impossible, as we cannot give condign satisfaction for the offences of which we have been guilty, nor make due reparation for the injury we have done Him. The Son of God undertook to do it in His own person; and to become sharers in this grace, we must fulfil the conditions which He has laid down, by doing "worthy fruits of penance." Therefore, according to the measure of our sins, should be also the amount of our stripes, and according to our indulgence in unlawful pleasures, should be our abstinence from those that are lawful.

(β) Distributive justice requires of us to observe due proportion in the distribution of duties, emoluments, and burdens as far as depends upon us, and to rest contented with such as are assigned to us by lawfully constituted authority.

We practise this virtue when we keep our soul and body in their right place; giving the former in all things precedence, and treating the latter and its several senses with due severity, and making it in all things subservient to the soul. Again, it requires of us that we regulate our faculties of memory, understanding, and will, as the law of our Creator and Heavenly Father prescribes, and consequently allow them only such relaxation as is necessary to enable them to perform their functions most effectively.

How often, alas! do we sacrifice the soul to the body, and provide for its comfort and gratification at the soul's expense. If we took half the pains and care for the well-being of the soul that we do for that of our body, how soon should we become just!

(γ) Legal justice requires that one part should accommodate itself to the benefit of the whole, and should employ its energies to promote the common

good. Now the common good is secured by the observance of rule and regular discipline. Each of us as a member of a community or of the secular clergy, is then bound by this virtue to promote according to his position, by word and example, the observance of the Rules of our Order or state of life, and as far as possible to remove any dangers to their violation. There is no enemy to this virtue so great as a negligent Religious or an indifferent ecclesiastic. There is no greater source of scandal, no greater enemy of the glory of God or of souls.

(δ) Vindicative justice exacts that punishment shall be proportionate to the fault. How often do we fail in this respect! How often under the influence of anger or impatience do we deal harshly and unjustly with penitents in the sacred tribunal, with children in our schools, with inferiors or servants! How hard and unsparing are we in our words and conduct with regard to the failings and shortcomings of others! But, alas, how loath to punish ourselves! How often does our conscience accuse us of guilt, and yet we are deaf to its voice. We are zealous for justice in regard of others, but not in regard of ourselves. It is surely time to get rid of this delusion.

4. *Temperance*, in its wide sense, may be defined as the virtue by which the affections of the soul are restrained within the limits prescribed by faith and right reason; or in a stricter sense, by which the sensual appetites are kept under control, especially as regards food, drink, and modesty.

Whatever indulgence we grant to the senses and to our bodies, is a proportional detriment to the soul; it diminishes the familiarity and confidence which should mark our intercourse with God, who turns away from the carnal man, in whom the Divine Spirit is either languishing or from whom He is banished.

Again, the sensual man finds no comfort in conversation with God, according to that of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things, that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand."

In the practice of this virtue, we ought to be careful of moderation in the use of things, not only which are lawful, but also those which are necessary, such as sleep, food, recreation, all of which should be regulated by the requirements of nature and of our state of life. It is as necessary for us to live lives of temperance, as it is to regulate them by the exercise of prudence, justice, and fortitude. Let us examine ourselves how far we practise this virtue. Do we observe great moderation as regards the indulgence of our senses, especially of the eyes and palate? Do we give too much time to recreation, to useless and frivolous conversation? Do we control our natural inclinations and affections? Do we energetically repress feelings of anger and irritability, and avoid all undue use of the tongue in exaggerated expressions of praise or blame? If we find ourselves faulty, let us determine at once to correct ourselves, and let us beg of God that He will give us the grace to keep our resolutions for the time to come.

16.—THE ORDINARY SOURCES OF DANGER.

How exalted and sublime is the office of the priest ! How holy is his calling, in which he is brought into immediate communion with our Incarnate Lord ! Daily he offers Him up in the Sacrifice of the Mass, daily he dispenses His Flesh and Blood to the faithful ; for long hours He applies His cleansing Blood to wash away the deep stains from the souls of sinners, and constantly is adding new members to the Mystical Body of Christ. How holy then should be the priest, to whom this same Lord apportions abundant graces to enable him to fulfil worthily these his holy duties.

On the other hand, great also are the dangers which beset the priest. For if the devil is especially hostile to all those who are Christians, his hatred is far more deep and inveterate against those so closely allied to our Lord Himself, and whose profession it is to frustrate all his plans for the ruin of souls. The world also, from several points of view, presents greater dangers for the priest than for others, with its false principles, pernicious maxims, and depraved examples ; and lastly the priest is human, and bears about with him the weakness and waywardness of our fallen nature which, if it were not for the signal graces attached to his divine vocation, would render him absolutely incapable of satisfying his tremendous obligations. His life and actions are engaged in the supernatural and in the care of souls, he must breathe a supernatural atmosphere, his work is spiritual, and yet at every step and at every turn he is confronted with the natural, and is liable to be affected by material influences. That we may remove these dangers as far as possible, and may protect ourselves against failure

in our holy vocation, let us make the following consideration.

Amongst all the sources of danger, the greatest and most common is (1) *Neglect of spiritual duties*. When we were preparing for the priesthood, with what scrupulous care we performed all our religious duties, with what fidelity we applied ourselves to daily meditation and vocal prayer, with what fervour and devotion we visited the Blessed Sacrament and received Holy Communion: and with what care and reverence, with what recollection and lively faith did we offer up the Holy Sacrifice when we were admitted to the priesthood. We could say with all the fervour of Holy David, "How lovely are Thy tabernacles: O Lord of hosts, my heart longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."¹ "I will go to the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth."² As long as this disposition lasts all will go well; for to constancy and earnestness in our prayer are attached the graces of God, to enable us to discharge our obligations and perform our duties; but there is danger lest from pressure from work, from fatigue, from real or often imaginary sickness, from the withdrawal of sensible consolation, or from worry or harass, or pre-occupation of mind, we begin to be less faithful and fervent, occasionally omitting or contracting the time of prayer, less diligent in the necessary preparation for the celebration of Mass, or in giving full time to thanksgiving after it. Nor does the danger end here. Like a fast spreading ulcer, there is danger lest this negligence will extend to the recitation of the Breviary which will be performed in a hurried and distracted manner, and to the administration of all the sacraments of the Church, until all spiritual duties and offices are performed in a perfunctory, languid, indifferent manner,

¹ Psalm lxxxiii. 2. ² Psalm xlii. 4.

and often are omitted altogether. The result will naturally be, withdrawal of grace, and then God help the poor priest! To avoid this the greatest danger, let us apply the maxim, *principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur*. In our examination for ordinary confession let us call ourselves to account as to the fixed hours of our prayers; whether we pray with attention, reverence, and devotion; whether we ever omit them, or shorten or change the time of them.

(2) The second danger to which we are exposed is *Indulgence of the senses*. Closely connected with the preceding, and not unfrequently its cause, is the liberty conceded to the senses. Under the mistaken idea that the priest should know all that is going on in his congregation, and also that he should be up to the times, there is a danger of his persuading himself that he must see everything, must read everything, must hear everything. The consequence of this will be not only an enormous loss of time, but a great dissipation of mind, a morbid curiosity, a dangerous development of the imagination, and endless occasions of sins. How many have lost their innocence or even their faith by indulging their eyes or by imprudent reading. For a priest to indulge his senses in this manner is not only to expose himself to the proximate occasion of sin, but also to give great disedification, and to bring his sacred calling into disrepute.

(3) A third source of danger is *Love of self-ease*. Amongst the various benefits conferred upon the world by modern civilization, and the signs of progress during the second half of the nineteenth century, if we are to believe modern historians and political economists, is the increase of the comforts of life, and the general amelioration of the condition of all classes of society. Whilst the higher classes have means of gratification and are provided with luxuries, which the

preceding generations never dreamt of, the lower classes regard as necessities what fifty years ago were superfluities to the rich and select few. The consequence of this is a general tendency to self-indulgence and to creature comforts, the avoidance of labour, or of anything which demands sacrifice or interferes with self-ease; in a word, it is to put the body above the soul and materialize life. Hence the importance attached to eating and drinking, to clothing, to sleeping, to the varieties of furniture, &c., all of which administer to bodily comfort.

This general tendency is invading the sanctuary, not without grave danger to the priesthood unless vigorously resisted. It shows itself in the lavish furniture of the sitting-room, and provision of the toilet, in the generous expenditure on table and cellar, in the quantity and quality of clothes and shoes, in the care expended on the body of death which we carry about with us. Neatness and cleanliness are admirable and edifying in those more advanced in years, but in the young priest neatness may be more easily dispensed with, and that without danger of disedification. Let us examine ourselves on this point, and see how far we carry out the imitation of Jesus Christ in regard to poverty in the details of our daily lives. As a rule, the more simple and hardy our manner of life, and the less account we make of bodily comforts and conveniences, the greater will be our influence for good, and the more we shall be respected. Elegance is hardly expected in a priest.

(4) A fourth danger is *Effusion on outward things*. When we consider the position of the Catholic priest in the present state of religion, the small number of priests, and the multitude of the duties which he is called upon to fulfil, this presents a great danger. He has to preach very frequently, he has to undertake the

management of confraternities or guilds both spiritually and financially, to visit the sick in hospitals and prisons, as well as those scattered through a large parish, to manage his schools, to visit and take the census of his parishioners, to go about to collect means of providing for the expenses or support of his mission, or often for paying off debts, &c., to organize concerts, or bazaars for the same objects of charity or religion, to patronize clubs or public games of his parishioners, &c., what wonder then is it that he is often tempted to throw himself into all these active works, and thereby expose himself to neglect what is of infinitely greater importance, the interior life and the progress of his own soul? What wonder that his spiritual duties are contracted or omitted, that his office is hurried over with little attention or devotion, his Mass is said with little recollection, but many distractions? What wonder that he finds but little consolation in things spiritual, and consequently seeks satisfaction in these external occupations which withdraw him from recollection or union with God, and draw him down to a merely natural life? Then comes abuse of grace, gradual alienation from God, and finally a worldly and dissipated spirit which ordinarily ends in a sad manner. Oh! let us remember our first duty is to God by the sanctification of our own souls, and next to this the sanctification of the souls of as many others as possible; that all other things no matter how important they may be, occupy only a secondary and infinitely inferior place. We shall not be asked by our Supreme Judge who may at any time call upon us to give an account of our stewardship, whether our missionary life was a financial success, but whether we ourselves loved and served Him, and promoted His knowledge, love, and service in the souls entrusted to our care. Another source of danger is a habit of *carping criticism*. There

are some so blind to the defects of others, or of such a compassionating or easy disposition, that they fail in their duty by ignoring or excusing the faults of others, neglecting the counsel of St. Paul, "reprove, entreat, rebuke, in all patience and doctrine,"¹ and thereby incur serious responsibility before God; but there are others of a very different temperament, who are so keen-sighted as to see faults or defects in others, which exist simply in their own imagination, or which they grossly exaggerate; and this not only as regards their parishioners. Unfortunately they manifest the same spirit towards their brethren or even Superiors. They allow nothing that is said or done to pass, but they must give their judgment upon it, and too commonly the sentence is unfavourable. So distorted is their mental vision, so perverted is their judgment, that they invariably attach an unfavourable interpretation to whatever comes under their notice. They find it hard to approve of anything which they themselves have not initiated, or on which they have not been consulted. The preaching or direction of others is condemned, their manner of dealing with their congregations, their management of their parish or of their schools is censured, their conduct is canvassed; and not unfrequently the orders and regulations of Superiors and even of Bishops are passed in review and are strongly reprobated. Such persons lose the confidence of their colleagues, and are kept at arm's length; they are regarded as disaffected, and dangerous, and at length are left severely alone. The result too often is that they become friendless, and are left to consume their own spleen without any one to sympathize with them, and are thus forced to seek sympathy from the laity, who will think no better of them for their disloyalty towards their ecclesiastical brethren, and not unfre-

¹ 2 Timothy iv. 2.

quently it ends in demissorial letters, which is the beginning of a rapid downward course.

Let us of all things be loyal to each other. Surrounded as we are by enemies, let us stand by one another, let us encourage one another, let us defend and uphold one another; and if we cannot praise others, at least let us never forget ourselves so far as to say a word against them to the laity, or tolerate from the laity any disrespectful language against them. Let us rest assured that our loyalty will be appreciated by them, and their respect and confidence in us will be secured and augmented, whereas any disloyalty on our part would turn to our humiliation and discredit, recalling to the minds of our hearers the example of Judas, who was a traitor to his Divine Master as well as to his colleagues in the Apostolate.

Finally, another source of danger arises from *Visiting*. To visit those whose souls are entrusted to us by God, that we may teach them to know, love, and serve Him here, and thus secure eternal happiness hereafter, is a strict duty on us. We must know our sheep, and our sheep must know us; we must with Jesus go about doing good, comforting the sorrowful, encouraging the faint-hearted, counselling those who are in trouble, stimulating the negligent, confirming the good. Such visits draw down graces upon ourselves, and are a source of blessings to others; but let us beware of mere idle visits, which are uncalled for, where time is wasted, where unprofitable conversation is indulged in, where over-familiarity is allowed, which generally breeds contempt or worse. Let us visit the poor and sick and miserable, it is well; but let us leave it to others to visit the well-to-do or pious people, who do not need our help; let us remember that we are "not sent except for the lost sheep of Israel." Let us be

uncompromising on this point of visiting: for in some respects it is the most dangerous and prolific source of ruin.

If we find that we have been affected by any one of these sources of danger, we will thank God for letting us see it, we will humbly beg pardon for the faults therein committed, and will firmly resolve to guard against it for the future.

End with the "Our Father."

APPENDIX III.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY FURNISH MATTER FOR
ELECTION AND REFORMATION OF LIFE, USEFUL FOR
RELIGIOUS.

I.—ON ESTEEM FOR OUR VOCATION.

A religious vocation is a grace, or rather a series of graces, by which we are called to the special service of our King and Lord. From this it follows that it is a state of life highly honourable and happy, in which we enjoy a real and true liberty, and are protected from the cares, anxieties, and miseries of the world. It is a state most pleasing to God, most profitable to the Religious, and beneficial to society. These will furnish the points for our reflection.

Point 1.—It is pleasing to God, both as regards its end, and the means employed for its attainment. The end of man is to serve God in this life and so to secure eternal salvation. Now, this can be attained more *quickly*, more *surely*, and more *perfectly* in Religion, where besides the observance of the Commandments, we profess to follow the Evangelical Counsels, and to observe a code of rules by which regular discipline is secured. If he who observes the Commandments of God proves that he loves God¹ and Christ abides

¹ St. John xiv. 21—24.

in him and he in Christ,¹ and must be well pleasing to his Heavenly Father, how much more so must the Religious be, who in addition, and to be more conformed to our Blessed Lord and more intimately united with Him, cuts himself off from all things else, crucifies himself to the world and resigns his own will and judgment to the will and judgment of God, as manifested to him by his Superior. And this is done by all Religious, who thereby remove as far as possible all those great impediments to the attaining of our end, namely, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.²

Besides these means by which the attainment of our end is made more secure, and which are common to all Religious, there are the special rules peculiar to each Religious Order, which are so many applications of the Gospel prescribed by the holy men who under God have founded each, and which they have framed under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and have been approved and confirmed by the Church.

Point 2.—It is a state advantageous to the Religious himself. This is clear, whether we regard it from a supernatural or natural point of view. For as to the former, he is helped in the service of God by the vigilance and care of Superiors, and by the example of his equals; by the regulations of the time and manner in which each of his duties of piety, charity, and self-conquest has to be performed, and which are to him the clear expression of God's will in his regard. How different is the state of persons living in the world, who have often the greatest difficulty to discover, and are often left in doubt, as to what may be most pleasing to God.

Again, these latter are frequently crippled and harassed by the demands made upon them by the

¹ St. John iii. 24.

² 1 St. John ii. 10.

requirements of their state, by the cares and anxieties of their family or friends, and by the laws and regulations of society, or the exactions of public opinion, and in this way their liberty is curtailed, and their freedom of action is destroyed. Not so with Religious. They acknowledge but one Master, and Him only they obey, knowing no natural ties, for from these by their engagements they have broken themselves loose, and thus they enjoy the most perfect freedom, namely, that of the children of God, to serve whom is to reign, and whose yoke is sweet, whose burden is light.¹

How profitable religious life is to those who are called, even in a material point of view, is also clear. They are freed from the cares and responsibilities of the world, from all anxieties as to food, clothing, and lodging, from the tyranny of fashion and of public opinion, from the malice and machinations of enemies, from the flattery and insincerity of false friends, and from the countless miseries which arise from jealousy. They dwell in a peaceful harbour, into which the agitating storms of the world do not enter, and where the bright light of God's countenance is always shining.

Point 3.—It is beneficial to society. Those who are called to the active life benefit society, some by teaching children and by bringing them up and instructing them in the knowledge and love of God, and conducting them in the way of true peace and liberty to eternal life; others by nursing the aged and sick poor; others by visiting those in affliction and administering relief and consolation; others by sheltering orphans or reclaiming those who have gone astray. In a word, there is no one of the many miseries to which society is exposed for which our Heavenly Father has not provided by their means.

And to those Religious who are called to follow the

¹ St. Matt. xi. 30.

example of Mary by embracing a life of contemplation, they too are a benefit to society. By their prayers they draw down the blessing and protection of God on their friends and country and ward off calamities which would otherwise overwhelm them; or again, they spend their lives in rude penance and prayers to make satisfaction for the crimes and sins of their countrymen. They sacrifice their freedom and voluntarily embrace a life-long confinement and the bonds of charity to win for others the blessed liberty of the children of God. From all this, of what precious value is the religious state? Considered in itself it is an exalted, glorious, heroic, and supernatural form of life. In its results on others it is most useful, both in the natural and supernatural orders, not only to individuals, but also to society. As regards those who are called to it, it represses all that is bad or less good in them, and develops in them all the finest qualities of their nature and purifies it, and thus makes them models and objects of admiration and encouragement to their fellow-men. Hence we must conclude that we ought to love and cherish our vocation, to hold it in the highest esteem, to embrace it with all our fervour, and observe and treasure our holy Rules, and spare no pains in acquiring its spirit and perfecting ourselves in it.

Let us examine ourselves carefully and see whether in practice we hold our vocation in due esteem, with what care we observe our Rules, whether we employ the means of acquiring the true spirit of our Order and of constantly keeping it alive in ourselves, and whether by word and example we try to promote it in our brethren. Finally, let us determine what is to be corrected in this respect, and let us beg of God and our Lady to help us to do it.

End with "Our Father."

2.—ON ESTEEM FOR OUR RULES.

Next to esteem of our vocation to Religion, and necessarily connected with it, is the appreciation of Rule; and in fact the test and measure of the one is the practical observance of the other. Hence a Religious who cares little for his Rules, and thinks nothing of breaking such as are not binding under sin, shows little regard for his vocation, too often is a source of disedification or scandal to his brethren, and sometimes ends in abandoning religious life altogether. To protect ourselves against this danger, let us consider the necessity and importance of our Rule, its sacred character, and the spirit with which we should observe it.

Point 1.—The necessity of the Rule.—In every collection of men who combine together for the attainment of one common end, and whose mutual co-operation is necessary to secure it, it is indispensable that they bind themselves by certain rules to a common action. So too is it with those who join together for the promotion of God's glory in the religious state. This is clear from the action of God in the formation of various Religious Orders, as also from the approbation and confirmation of such rules by the Vicar of Christ, from the conduct of those whom the Spirit of God has selected to found them, as well as from the dictates of right reason.

Moreover, as in an army, all are not called upon to perform the same duties, but are differently equipped and are differently trained for their several respective duties, and in a human action the various powers of the soul and the senses and members of the body have each their respective functions to perform by which they

execute it; so in the promotion of God's glory and the sanctification of souls, the various Religious Orders each have a determined part to perform, and this is specified in the Rule.¹ From this consideration we see also, how important it is clearly to comprehend the nature and spirit of the Order to which we belong, and not to confound it with that of other Religious Congregations from which it is distinguished, and whose rules are consequently different. Unless this is done, the door is opened to abuses and innovations, which would tend to destroy unity and charity, and would imperil the very existence of an Order, or at least expose it to the sad necessity of its reformation. Let us beg of God to enlighten us to see how necessary and important it is that we should appreciate our holy Rule, love it and reduce it to practice.

Point 2.—The sacredness of our Rule.—This is clear from the approbation which it has received, from the holiness which it inculcates, and the holiness of those who practise it.

That the Vicar of Christ should approve it is testimony enough of its holiness, and suffices to stamp it as holy with all those who are members of the Church and are animated with the spirit of faith. As to its being holy in itself and in what it inculcates, is equally clear. For as regards those parts which concern the three vows, and which constitute the substance and essence of religious life, our Blessed Lord, the source of all true holiness, has consecrated them by word and by example. He was poor in spirit and in effect;² from the manger to the sepulchre His poverty never abandoned Him; moreover, He loved and blessed the poor. As to chastity, He loved it so that He would be born of a Virgin, and Himself is the King of virgins, and is the source and model of all purity in body and in mind.

¹ Comp. Psalm xlv. 15.

² 2 Cor. vii. 9.

And the history of His Life is contained in one word, "He was obedient to Mary and Joseph, and to His Heavenly Father, and even to His cruel executioners."

That it is a holy thing to imitate our Blessed Lord is clear, and the greater and more perfect this imitation, the greater will be our perfection. How great then must be holiness involved in the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which is inculcated in the Rule!

Again, in our Rule other solid virtues are insisted upon, such as *humility*, which is to be acquired by the humiliations which are prescribed by it, and are practised by all fervent Religious; *mortification*, at least of the interior, and in the restraints of the eyes and tongue, for the repression of curiosity, of dissipation, and of a host of other faults; *recollection* and union with God in prayer; and *charity* in its highest perfection. Besides these there are other rules that pertain more immediately to the special end proposed by its Founder to the members of his Society, all of which are holy.

Lastly, the Rule is holy in the various members who observe it. Not that all those who are in Religion have attained the height of sanctity. There are plenty of good Religious, would that there were more saints! But this is not the fault of the Rule, but of those who from negligence, indifference, or self-indulgence, fail to observe it. But in all the Religious Orders whose birth dates back three hundred years, there are many whom Holy Church proposes to us as objects of admiration and imitation, and whose names she has inserted in the calendar of her saints.

With what reverence then should we not regard our Rule, what scrupulous care should we bring to its observance, not only in great things, but also in the smallest, seeing that in God's service nothing in reality is small.

Point 3.—In what spirit are we to observe our Rule.— There are some Religious who are great sticklers for the letter of the law, but fail to grasp its spirit, and *vice versâ*. Such persons are a source of danger and trouble in Religion, and fail to give edification or to promote charity. There is in all Orders an authorized and traditional interpretation which ought to be our guide as to observance; it should be complete, prompt, uncompromising, and cheerful. *Complete*, that is, entire, and not by halves, or done in a slovenly and perfunctory manner; *prompt*, not unreasonably deferred and put off to another time through a dilatory spirit so common in our day; *uncompromising*, throwing our whole soul into what we have to do, and doing it as perfectly as by God's grace we can; lastly, *cheerful*, for God loves a cheerful giver;¹ and by this means we shall give edification and encouragement to others, and be a living proof to those who behold us that His yoke is sweet and His burden is light,² and that His spirit is sweet.³

*Point 4.—*Let us examine ourselves and see how we respect and esteem our Rule. The best test is its observance. Do we, for example, leave ourselves entirely in the hands of Superiors, to use us where, when, as much, and as long as they like, without murmuring or complaining? Do we plead excuses of health, incapacity, or unfitness against their orders and appointments, and thereby force them to put our burdens on the shoulders of others, a thing which is as mean and unworthy of a Religious as it is cowardly? Do we shun all singularity in food, clothing, and outward comportment, or do we seek for extras on the plea of health, or for exemptions; a thing which conduces much to laxity in regular religious observance, and consequently is not to be lightly permitted? &c.

¹ 2 Cor. ix. 7.² St. Matt. xi. 30.³ Wisdom xii. 1.

Let us remember that we rarely violate our Rules without displeasing God, injuring ourselves, and disedifying our religious brethren. Let us bewail our frequent faults, and make practical resolutions for the time to come.

3.—ON THE VOW OF POVERTY.

Point 1.—A Religious, by his vow of poverty, resigns all proprietorship, and consequently cannot possess anything as his own or dispose of anything independently without leave of his Superior. He may have the *use* of those things which are sanctioned by his Rule, but even then he must be prepared to relinquish them at the reasonable command of the Superior; nor can he, even with the Superior's permission, make use of superfluities without detriment to his vow.

How necessary it is that this virtue be maintained in its integrity is clear from the importance attached to it by our Blessed Lord, from the estimation in which it was held by all the founders of Religious Orders, from the strict views taken of it by moral theologians, and from the sad effects which have resulted in those Religious Orders in which its observance has been relaxed.

The obligation contracted by this vow is two-fold. First, it obliges a Religious not to possess, or take, or receive any temporal thing in order to keep, use, or dispose of it without leave of his Superior; and secondly, not to accept of anything, even from externs or friends, and keep or dispose of it without the permission of Superiors. This is recognized by all theologians and canonists, and is adopted by all the masters of spiritual life.¹

¹ Comp. St. Augustine, *De com. vita*; St. Bernard, *Ad Monach.*

Nor is it enough to renounce exteriorly all proprietorship whilst interiorly we cherish a love of those things which we have abandoned, for such poverty would be hypocritical; nor, again, can it be said that we are really poor, even though in deed and interiorly we have quitted all things, if in Religion we are careful to have all we want, as good food, good clothes, good lodging, &c., and are troubled and murmur when we have not what we desire; for this is to be rich rather than poor, and shows a desire for a life of ease and plenty. If we are truly poor Religious, we must be content to want even what is deemed necessary, for the truly poor man despises even necessary things.

Point 2.—The excellence of this vow.—1. It is the foundation of evangelical perfection.¹ Our Lord, moreover, began His Sermon on the Mount by blessing holy poverty; His whole life was a declaration of the same truth. St. Jerome and St. Gregory assert the same.² So too St. Ignatius³ says “that poverty is to be looked upon as the wall and fortress of Religion, and is to be preserved in all its purity as far as God’s grace will enable us.”

2. We see its excellence too from the rewards which God attaches to it. For our Lord declares that it shall be rewarded by an infinite treasure in Heaven and the possession of an eternal Kingdom. They too who have abandoned all for His sake shall on the Day of Judgment exercise the office of judges and not of criminals.⁴

3. But even in this life it is rewarded a hundred-fold.⁵ This refers not only to spiritual goods, but extends also to external things. For we have everything, nay often more than we need, and have not to

¹ Comp. St. Matt. xix. 21. ² Hom. xxxii. ³ Reg. Sum. 3.

⁴ St. Matt. xix. 27. Comp. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquin.

⁵ St. Matt. xix. 29.

ask whether it be dear or cheap; we have peace of mind, freedom from anxiety and care, consideration and respect, such as we should never have met with otherwise, absence from toil, and abundance of leisure to increase in virtue and perfection. It causes the soul to despise all earthly things and enables it to direct all its thoughts to Heaven—to soar more easily to God and unite itself more closely to Him.

4. Lastly, it fosters and protects the other two vows and removes many dangers which are opposed to them, and is the surest safeguard against relaxation and the need of reform.

Point 3.—From the many advantages and excellences of poverty it follows that we should have a great esteem and love of it. As a child loves its mother, clings to her and flies to her for protection, so should every Religious treat holy poverty; should love it as a mother¹ and regard it as the bulwark and fortress of religious life against the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil. If this love is sincere, we shall desire to experience its effects and shall accept them with joy. We shall be sparing in the use even of those things which are deemed necessary, and quit ourselves of them as much as we can, whether in food, clothing, lodging, or everything else. We shall fly from all unnecessary exemptions and indulgences under the pretexts of health, &c., and conform to the common life, thereby cutting off all causes of disedification and occasions of uncharitableness. Let us seriously examine ourselves on these points, and at once correct anything in which we are wanting.

¹ P. vi. *Const. S.J.*

4.—ON THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE.

How dear to the Sacred Heart of our Lord is the virtue of obedience is clear from the example which He has left us in His own mortal Life. He was obedient to Mary and Joseph, to Pilate, and even to His very executioners; but this obedience was subordinated to the will of His Heavenly Father. His will was to do what was well pleasing to Him always; nay, it was His meat and drink—so to say, He lived upon it. In imitation of Him the saints have loved and cultivated this virtue, and many at the call of God have bound themselves by vow to observe it. For Religious it is made one of the substantials of their calling. We will then consider its nature and object, the motives of it, and the means to be employed in order to practise and perfect ourselves in it.

Point 1.—By the vow of obedience we bind ourselves to submit ourselves and our own will and judgment to our Superior, as holding the place of God, or in some religious bodies as the custodian and interpreter of the Rule. This obedience extends not only to our actions and exterior things, but it must embrace also our judgment and will, which we conform to the judgment and will of the Superior who occupies the place of Christ; nor must it stop when the things enjoined are difficult or repugnant, or if the Superior be wanting in prudence or other qualities, seeing that he holds the place of Christ who cannot be mistaken, and who in His providence will make good what is wanting in His representative.¹ How perfect is the sacrifice which we offer to God by this vow is clear from the fact that we

¹ St. Matt. xxiii. 3; Ephes. vi. 5.

retain nothing of ourselves, but consecrate even the noblest part of ourselves to God our Lord, which is our judgment and will, so as to will only what He wills, and judge all things as He judges them, as He is pleased to make known to us by him whom He has placed over us, namely, our Superior. And all this must be done *thoroughly, promptly, heartily*, and in all humility, without any excuse or murmuring, and in a spirit of reverence and love.

Point 2.—The motives which should prompt us to excel in obedience are: 1. That thereby we imitate most perfectly our Blessed Lord, for we make an offering of our whole selves to God, whose will and judgment we substitute in place of our own.

2. By this we avoid all error of will or judgment, inasmuch as we conform them to those of the Superior who is in the place of God over us, and who has to answer to God for us.

3. We thus promote concord and charity, inasmuch as our wills and judgments are all in harmony with those of God as manifested in our Superior.

4. It is necessary not only for the good government of the Order, but also for its efficiency and even for its very existence, as reason shows. It is quite possible that, from imprudence, or under the influence of some less well-ordered passion, or from misunderstanding, the Superior may err in the command he gives, but even then we shall not lose by our obedience, as the providence of God will not permit it, and will only turn the occasion to our greater sanctification if we obey in a spirit of faith and love, as if it was Christ Himself who had enjoined what is commanded.

Point 3.—In order that we may acquire facility in the exercise of this virtue, and that we may attain some degree of perfection in it, we must cultivate a life of faith, which will accustom us to look upon our

Superior not as a mere man subject to faults like ourselves, but as the representative and mouthpiece of God, and with great simplicity to accept his orders as the expressions of His will, even though we may be blamed or penanced for faults of which we have not been guilty.

We must also be practically indifferent as to the country, the place, and the office which obedience may assign us, looking upon it as the expression of the Divine will, and in a spirit of holy confidence and faith embracing it from the hands of God. Another useful practice is to renew our vows frequently, more particularly after Mass or immediately after Holy Communion, with all the fervour we can command. Finally, to make frequent acts of humility and self-abasement and of thanksgiving to God for having called us to serve Him and glorify Him in Religion by a life of dependence.

Let us examine ourselves and see if our obedience is always supernatural, by which alone it is rendered easier the longer and older we are in Religion, and without which, it is rendered more difficult as years advance; and our vocation is always in danger. Do we condemn Superiors and their mode of government? Do we murmur or listen to the complaints of others? Let us remember that we live in times and in a country in which we are exposed to special danger, when independence is held as honourable, and where liberty of speech is esteemed and praised. If we are faulty, let us resolve to amend.

5.—ON RELIGIOUS CHARITY.

If charity is necessary in all who profess to follow our Lord, and if it is impossible to love Him unless we also love our neighbour, how much more necessary is it for those who are called to a most close union with Him and to a far more perfect imitation of Him than others, by being called to a state of perfection in the religious life? Holy David exclaims: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,"¹ and we may add, but how bad and how sad it is when they are divided by discord. When charity prevails in a community, the convent is as the antechamber of Heaven, and life therein is a foretaste of the happiness of our eternal home; but when charity is banished, it becomes somewhat worse than a purgatory. Hence as Religious we are bound in an especial manner to cultivate this virtue, and to strive to attain its perfection in ourselves and to promote it in others. To help us to do this, let us make the present consideration, on its necessity, on its exercise, and on the blessings attached to it.

Point 1.—As to its necessity, our Blessed Lord has insisted on it repeatedly and in the strongest terms. We are to love our neighbour as we love ourselves—nay, even as He has loved us: it is by this characteristic that we are to be recognized as His own disciples, and unless we love the brotherhood the charity of God is not in us. Again, it is written, "The soul that has not charity dwells in the regions of death." This charity is not to be confined to mere external ceremonial, nor is its requirement satisfied by the avoidance

¹ Psalm cxxxii. 1.

of giving offence. We must have a cordial love and sincere desire of the good of others, we must speak well and with respect of others, and in our conduct must show deference and consideration in their regard at the sacrifice of our own convenience, anticipating their wishes and providing for their comforts. And all this charity is to be shown not only to those who are our friends, but it must be extended to strangers, and even, says our Lord, to our enemies and to those who calumniate and persecute us.¹ Such is the law imposed upon all Christians by Jesus Christ, and on its fulfilment will depend the salvation and degree of glory with which it is to be rewarded.²

Point 2.—The motives to aim at the perfection of charity are many and grave. (1) The manner in which our Lord has impressed it upon His disciples. (2) He has substituted our neighbours in place of Himself as the objects of our love, and has transferred to them His claims upon our charity. (3) They are the members of His own Body, and like ourselves are vessels consecrated to His service and destined to share with us in an eternal Kingdom. But as Religious there are other powerful motives. (4) Our brethren have left the world and have abandoned family and friends and all things else to give themselves entirely to the praise and service of God, and to the love of the Spouse of our souls; therefore they have a special claim upon our love and gratitude. (5) By their profession they have become the special objects of attack and of the malice of our enemy the devil, the enemy of our human nature, and of the world. Against them we are enlisted together to fight, and if we would secure the victory, we stand in great need of a close union in the bonds of charity. (6) We are pledged to each other for the attainment of one end, and that a noble one, and to be

¹ St. Luke vi 28.

² St. Matt. xxv.

attained by one common means which is our Rule, and by the exercise of the same virtues and the same manners and customs; from whence it follows that not only should the exercise of charity be more easy to us, but it is also the more necessary.

Point 3.—God rewards and blesses fraternal charity.

First, He promises forgiveness to those who practise this virtue, and pledges Himself to deal with us as we deal with our neighbour. "But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves, for charity covereth a multitude of sins."¹ And again: "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what you mete, it shall be measured to you again."² He further declares that unless we have charity, even though we speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have faith enough to move mountains, and distribute our goods to the poor through a philanthropic disposition, they will avail us nothing without charity.³ On the other hand, "charity edifieth,"⁴ for by his meekness, patience, unselfishness, and humility, the Religious gives edification and good example to all his brethren, and diffuses, as it were, a pleasant perfume through the whole community, and attracts others to follow in his footsteps.⁵ Where charity flourishes, there also will be true joy and interior peace manifesting itself also exteriorly.⁶ Lastly, it secures religious fervour, cheerfulness in God's service, and rapid progress towards perfection.

Let us then examine ourselves seriously on our dispositions and conduct in regard of this virtue. Do we treat our religious brethren with great reverence, patience, and forbearance? Do we blind ourselves to their faults and shortcomings, and observe only the good that is in them? Do we anticipate them by

¹ 1 St. Peter iv. 8.

² St. Matt. vii. 2.

³ 1 Cor. xiii.

⁴ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

⁵ Cant. i. 3.

⁶ Galat. v. 13, 22.

kindly offices? Do we repress all inordinate affections and aversions, and eschew all particular attachments, the real enemy of fraternal charity? Do we guard against the danger to which we are exposed by our national bluntness and insular character? In our dealings with those of other nations, are we intolerant of their manners and habits, or always ready to make due allowance for them? Do we show a spirit of kindness and hospitality to visitors? Towards the sick do we show great patience, and attend upon them with tenderness, thoughtfulness, and care?

As we may sin more easily and grievously in the matter of charity, it is well to examine ourselves most thoroughly, and to see in what we need to correct our conduct in regard to it. Let us never forget the golden rule, "To do to others as we would be done by."

6.—ON TEPIDITY IN RELIGION.

There is no vice against which the masters of spiritual life inveigh more strongly than against this, styling it "the abridgment of evil," "the mother of hardness of heart," "the sepulchre of the soul," "a slow poison," &c. It makes religious life unbearable, turning all its duties into labours and heavy burthens, and robbing the soul of all cheerfulness, hopefulness, and consolation. It causes a loathing and nausea of prayer and spiritual things, a repugnance to recollection and mortification, and an inclination to seek relief in dissipation and in the pleasures of sense, in idleness and useless conversation. It is, however, to be carefully distinguished from the state of a soul which, for its sanctification and for the promotion of God's glory, is allowed by Him to suffer from what St. Ignatius

describes as aridity and desolation of spirit, and which arises from no fault of its own, but from the malice of the devil, either directly or indirectly.

Let us take this subject as useful for our consideration.

Point 1.—The origin of tepidity is generally to be ascribed to a want of appreciation of and consequent negligence and indifference in our spiritual duties, especially in meditation and examination of conscience, in neglecting the counsel of our Lord, *Vigilate et orate*—“to watch and pray,” whence the soul grows drowsy and inactive, and lays itself open to temptation. Or again, it frequently arises from natural activity and undue effusiveness on outward things, or from a spirit of laziness and a disposition to lose one’s time in idle and unprofitable conversations. It often also arises from the indulgence of a morbid curiosity to see and hear everything that passes, and to learn all the news, and then to go about imparting it to others, by which silence is violated, the spirit of recollection is wounded or destroyed.

Point 2.—Among the many *signs* of tepidity we may mention—the prayers and meditation are rarely made, or by fits and starts, and always in a weary, heartless, and slovenly manner; examinations of conscience and the particular examination are neglected or slurred over in a perfunctory manner; all one’s duties are performed out of habit or routine, and are prompted by mere natural motives.

Violations of rules as not binding under sin, and even deliberate venial sins are frequently committed, and cause little or no qualms of conscience. The company of those who are fervent, and whose conduct is exemplary, is shunned, and the counsels and advice of the spiritual director is avoided or ignored.

Such are the chief signs of tepidity, by which we may safely test how far we have cause to fear lest we may be in that state.

Point 3.—What are the *means* to be adopted to correct it?

1. We must seek out the roots of it in our souls. These ordinarily will be inordinate affections to things of earth in the shape of ease, pleasure, honour, or health; or dread of labour, pain, and humiliations. Let us determine at all cost to eradicate them.

2. To acquire the grace necessary to do this we must at once renew our fervour and fidelity in prayer and meditation, and our exactness in the use of the particular examination.

3. To dwell often upon the great truths and upon the Passion and Death of our Blessed Lord.¹

4. To practise silence and fly from all distracting occupations.

Let us examine how we stand with regard to this tepidity, and beg God to protect us from falling into it. End with "Our Father."

7.—ON COMMON LIFE.

St. John Berchmans was used to say, *Vita communis mea maxima mortificatio*,"—"Common life is my greatest mortification;" and certainly there is very much to justify the saying; for to observe common life strictly and constantly, calls for sweet violence to self in almost every action of the day, and involves the exercise of humility, mortification, charity, and other virtues, so necessary for all those who live in a community. Common life is doubly necessary where

¹ St. Augustine, in Psalm cvi. ; St. Gregory, in Job.

members are gathered from various countries, with different temperaments, customs, manners and modes of life, and where the respective talents and tastes are often very opposed. If regularity is not to give place to disorder, if uniformity and union are to be preserved, it is easy to see that common life must be maintained at all cost, and that consequently whosoever is incapable of observing it from one cause or another, unless it be of a temporary character, is unfitted for conventual or monastic life. In order then to impress upon ourselves the importance and necessity of this practice, as also to increase in ourselves the practical love of it, we will consider the following points.

1. Lay persons who are striving seriously to serve God, are frequently compelled to deliberate as to what God's service or glory may require of them, and are obliged often to act in doubt as to what may be the Divine will, whereas the person consecrated to God in religious life is subject to no such uncertainty, having his rule of life in all its details clearly drawn out for him. The rules and customs of his Institute, the orders of Superiors, and the approved traditions of his Order trace out the line of conduct which he is to follow in every circumstance of his daily life. When a person seeks admission then into any Religious Order, he implicitly at least pledges himself to observe its rules, customs, and traditions, and in honour, truth, and justice, he is bound to be faithful to his engagements. A primary notion of religious life is that uniformity be observed in all things; and hence in most Religious Orders, this is insisted upon to such an extent as to appear even ridiculous to persons in the world, and a perpetual source of annoyance; nor do we find any exceptions to the regular observance of the letter or spirit of the rule allowed even to those who have grown old and enfeebled in Religion. Were

it otherwise, such an Institute would be regarded with grave mistrust, as opening the door to relaxation of discipline, and as militating against the idea of community life.

2. By "common life" *order* and *regularity* are secured. When all rise at the same time, perform their religious exercises at the same hours, partake of the same food, are present at the same recreations, and retire to rest at a fixed time, then all goes on smoothly and in an orderly manner: "By Thy ordinance the day goeth on."¹ As a machine whose several parts are fitted together and work in harmony, fulfils the end for which it was designed efficiently and with perfect satisfaction, so too a community, each of whose members observes the rules and customs, attains its end efficiently to the edification and satisfaction of all. On the other hand, where common life is not observed, where exemptions are permitted, or extras are allowed, the whole community is, so to speak, thrown out of gear, irregularity is introduced, and the community may be compared to a machine in which one or more of the wheels fails to move, or moves eccentrically, and thus causes confusion, noise, or total disarrangement, so that the end for which it was made is either imperfectly attained or not secured at all.

3. By the observance of "common life," *fervour* is also secured. Where we find a community in which the members are all animated by a spirit of recollection, and all cultivate habitual union with God, there also shall we find religious fervour; there too, as a necessary consequence, the rules and customs which are the expression of God's will, will be kept; discipline and silence will be maintained, and habitual self-restraint will be universal. But once let human nature be allowed to assert itself, especially in regard to material

¹ Psalm cxviii. 91.

comforts or bodily requirements, and at once the door is opened to relaxation of discipline, to exemptions and singularities; self-restraint gives place to self-indulgence, the religious spirit of mortification is supplanted by the worldly spirit of self-ease, and in the same proportion the spirit of fervour declines and dies out.

4 "Common life" preserves and maintains *Charity*. Where common life is adhered to, each Religious is a source of edification to his brethren by his exemplary regularity, he wins their admiration and respect and consequently also their love. Thus religious charity is promoted, each one preventing his brother in acts of kindness and self-sacrifice: whereby we may justly say that religious life becomes a kind of anticipation of our heavenly home. On the contrary, when one is observed to make light of rules and customs, to seek exemptions from those things that are laborious or disagreeable to flesh and blood, and thus to throw them upon others; when again he is not satisfied with the ordinary provision made for his religious brethren, when he is not content to bear the inconveniences which are attached to his profession of humility, poverty, mortification, and obedience, he not only becomes a source of disedification, but also a cause of irritation, murmuring and discontent, and what is far worse, an object of scandal; for by his example he leads others to seek for the same exemptions and indulgences. It is in this manner that the spirit of the world is at present trying to force its way into religious houses, and that the love of self-ease, under the pretext of necessity, is striving to oust the spirit of self-denial, which is synonymous with the practice of the three essential vows of Religion.

5. From a consideration of all these inestimable advantages and blessings attached to common life, and of the miseries attendant on its non-observance, we see

the explanation why it is that the founders of Religious Orders have without exception attached such importance to it; why in their General Congregations such stringent regulations have so often been made regarding it; and why Holy Church has set such store upon it, as to prohibit any violations of it by severe laws. Such regulations are abundantly justified, by the knowledge of the grave evils which are introduced into a Religious Order when this common life is not insisted on. For the letter as well as the spirit of the rules, drawn up after severe penances and much prayer by the founder, and approved and confirmed by the Holy See, as the application of the Gospel and the expression of God's will, for all those who have really been called to observe them, are imperilled.

Again, all order and regularity is sacrificed, where one is dispensed from one rule, one from another, a concession is granted to one, is refused to another, who probably stands in greater need of it, but whose spirit of denial prompts him to decline it. The spirit of laxity, self-indulgence, and worldliness imperceptibly diffuses itself through a community, and the bad example of one makes itself felt in many, who are too easily influenced in a downward direction, to the irritation, annoyance, and disgust of those who see with sorrow the spirit of self-indulgence undermining the truly religious spirit of mortification and self-denial.

Let us examine ourselves seriously on this important subject, and see what are our dispositions with regard to common life. Do we *practically* appreciate its blessings and advantages? Do we live in the practical conviction of its necessity? Do we seek exemptions on the pretext of health or any other grounds, thus putting our bodily well-being before our spiritual good, and the honest and generous

observance of our rules? Have we any reason to fear that by so doing we have furnished the occasion for others to follow our example, thereby encouraging the less fervent, and disedifying those who live up to their profession, and honestly adhere to their engagements?

Let us see if this has arisen from want of self-denial or from positive love of self-ease, or from an imaginary necessity; if so, let us sincerely regret it, and if we value our religious vocation, let us at once resolve to amend. *Nunc dixi, nunc capi, hac mutatio dextera Excelsi.*

“Our Father.”

8.—ON EXTERNAL MODESTY.

The world expects from those who are Religious great self-control and modesty in their external deportment, and is easily disedified and shocked when it does not find it; and with reason, for those who profess to follow Jesus Christ, who are supposed to know Him intimately, and to form themselves interiorly and exteriorly after His example, should manifest it by their modesty.¹ This duty is more incumbent on those who have a certain care of souls, and have by their office to mix with people of the world, or are employed in external works, such as teaching, visiting, &c.

Point 1.—The rules of modesty conduce to the acquisition of interior mortification and the promotion of a spirit of recollection; and furnish constant occasions of exterior self-denial.

On the observance of them will much depend our authority, our influence, and the reputation in which

¹ Philipp. iv. 5.

we shall be held by externs. On the other hand, by neglect of them we expose ourselves to misinterpretation and suspicion, as also to many dangers and temptations against our second vow, seeing that such negligence opens the door to dissipation, curiosity, irregularity, and aridity in spiritual duties. Moreover, it causes us to look lightly upon our shortcomings and faults, and thereby exposes us to the danger of falling into some grievous sin, according to that of Ecclesiasticus, "And he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little."¹ Above all, these rules are the great preservative of holy purity, as we have said, and consequently should be held in great reverence and esteem: for whosoever should presume to say that he entertained no fear with regard to holy chastity, and therefore were to make little of these rules, is very near his fall, and cannot with impunity give full rein to his senses. This is proved both by reason and by sad experience in those who have thrown off the religious habit and have gone back to the world.

Point 2.—The unbridled Religious, no matter how great may be his accomplishments and learning, his eloquence and zeal, will find all his efforts comparatively useless unless he succeeds in winning the esteem and respect of those amongst whom he labours: for no one will have confidence in him or will treat with him on matters concerning the salvation of his soul. On the other hand, whoever practises the restraint imposed by these rules, will, by the example which he gives of holy modesty, win the confidence of others, and attract them to him for counsel. He will edify others by his *humility* in speaking of himself always with great modesty, whilst of others he has nothing to say which is not to their credit and in their praise; by his *prudence* and *discretion* in refraining from trifling, loud laughter,

¹ Ecclus. xix. i.

foolish jokes, and boisterous talking; and by his *affability*, which eschews all vulgarity and buffoonery, whilst it attracts by its amiable and courteous manner; and by his *self-restraint* in the use of the senses, and in the general composure which he manifests in all his words and actions.

Point 3.—Let us, then, examine ourselves and see if there is anything to correct in respect of our exterior conduct.

Do we show modesty, humility, together with a due religious gravity, in all we say and do?

Do we indulge our curiosity by turning our eyes on every side and try to see everything that passes, instead of keeping them modestly cast down except when in conversation with another? Do we show the peacefulness of our souls by preserving great calmness and serenity of countenance?

Are we cleanly and orderly in our habit and dress? Are we hurried and bustling in our movements when there is no necessity for it, or, on the other hand, do we lounge or dawdle? Do we try to follow in all circumstances and on all occasions that counsel of St. Paul, "Let your modesty be known to all men, for the Lord is nigh,"¹ and thus by our very presence inspire a spirit of recollection and of reverence for God?

End with "Our Father."

¹ Philipp. iv. 5.

9.—ON REMEDIES AGAINST TEMPTATIONS.

We may lay it down as a law of Divine Providence that all of us will have to undergo temptations. God has so ordered it lest we should fall into a state of carelessness and negligence, or in order that we may give proofs of our fidelity and love towards our Blessed Lord. This is asserted by the Holy Spirit as well in the Old as in the New Testament. Thus we read, "Because thou wast pleasing unto God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee,"¹ and again, "Coming to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation,"² and again, "Blessed is the man who suffereth temptation,"³ &c. Wherefore it is necessary that we should always be prepared and with arms in our hands to resist them and overcome them.

First. Let us recall those words of St. Paul: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."⁴ If with one hand He permits trials, He assists us with the other. Therefore let us turn to Him, and gratefully thank Him for making us sharers in His Cross; let us conform ourselves to His most holy and adorable will, and earnestly call upon Him for His help and protection.

Secondly. Let us cherish a tender love for the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, and let us foster a filial confidence in her as our most loving Mother also.

Thirdly. Let us when tempted humble ourselves in the sight of God, calling to mind His many Divine benefits and blessings in our regard, and also the "last things."⁵

¹ Job xii. 13.² Eccclus. ii. 1.³ St. James i. 12.⁴ 1 Cor. x. 13.⁵ Eccclus. vii. 40.

Fourthly. Let us ask ourselves with Joseph, "How can I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?"¹ How can I consent to this temptation, and thus offend my Heavenly Father, who has loved and blessed me so? How rebel against my Creator, who has been so generous in His favours to me, against my Redeemer, who has died such a terrible Death for me, and has purchased my liberty at the price of His Most Precious Blood?

Fifthly. When we find ourselves harassed with temptations to blasphemy, or pride, or impurity, or scrupulosity, or despondency, let us at once elicit an act of the opposite, as of praise, humility, mortification, or confidence in God. We find many such acts in the Psalms of David, and elsewhere in the Sacred Scriptures.

Sixthly. Above all let us remember that our best weapons are prayer and the mortification of our passions and inordinate inclinations.

Seventhly. Let us not look upon our temptations as chastisements inflicted by God, though sometimes He allows them as punishments for our negligences and tepidity, but let us rather regard them as favours and devices of His love, thereby to compel us to run to Him for help, or to try our virtue and increase our merit. Thus counsels St. James, "My brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience;"² and Tobias, "This trial the Lord permitted that an example might be given to posterity of His patience, as also of holy Job."³

Eighthly. It is often an excellent thing to repeat certain passages of the Sacred Scripture which cast ridicule and contempt upon the devil, as, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, to the earth, that didst wound

¹ Genesis xxxix. 9.

² St. James i. 2.

³ Tobias ii. 12.

the nations,"¹ "Begone, Satan, and adore the Lord thy God," or, "Thanks be to God, who punishes thee for thy perversity," and the like.

Ninthly. Lastly, it is always good and profitable to make known our difficulties to a prudent director or spiritual Father, and to expose to him our temptations, that we may be aided by his advice and encouragement.

10.—ON THE ORDINARY SOURCES OF OUR FAULTS AND IMPERFECTIONS.

It may be well to review from time to time the general sources from which flow those ordinary faults, negligences, and imperfections which are more frequently to be met with in religious persons and those who live in communities.

1. The first source is *negligence in spiritual exercises*, and more especially in meditation. This is due mainly to the non-observance of the Additions which St. Ignatius lays down as the preliminaries of mental prayer, and fidelity to which is the price we pay to secure the special assistance of God. It also may be traced to a general dissipation of mind and a forgetfulness of the presence of God in the discharge of the duties of our office. As regards the two examinations of conscience, namely, the general and particular, they, too, are often of little or no profit through a similar reason. We fail in employing the *industria* prescribed in the Spiritual Exercises, and go through them in a spirit of routine, and without heart or energy. Too often the same apathy and want of earnestness spoils the fruit of our other spiritual duties.

¹ Isaias xiv. 12; Apoc. xii. 9.

2. Another not unfrequent origin of our faults is an undue appreciation of and attachment to our excellence and superiority. This *self-esteem* often insinuates itself into the soul on occasion of success in our studies or in preaching, or in the discharge of the duties imposed by obedience; and strangely enough it is generally found in those who are least justified in laying claim to it. Ordinarily it is accompanied by extreme sensitiveness, and a secret craving for the good appreciation of others.

3. A third source of many faults is *irritability*, fretfulness under inconveniences, obstinacy in maintaining our own opinion, and intolerance of that of others who may differ from us. Wherever this is not repressed effectually, it becomes also an occasion of many faults in others with whom we have to live.

4. Another source of frequent sins against charity is the inordinate affection for some and aversion for others. Strange to say that these two generally go together, and the result too commonly is to spoil the harmony and union of a religious community, and to create division.

5. A fifth origin of many faults is *selfishness*, which causes us to look to our own bodily comforts, and to seek self and our own interest, without any consideration for the convenience of others. This may often arise from an idea of our weakness or delicate state of health, or from our age and the labours which we have undergone requiring some consideration.

6. A sixth danger to Religious is a want of simplicity and ingenuousness in our conduct and conversation, and a political mode of action savouring of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and is an ignoble covering and cloak of ambition. This in some Religious Orders is rightly visited with the severest punishments as tending to undermine the stability and existence of an Order.

7. The seventh source of faults is *neglect of religious discipline*. If punctuality and silence flourish in a religious house, then we may reasonably conclude that a spirit of fervour flourishes also; but where these are absent there is too much reason to fear that tepidity prevails, and that faults are multiplied.

8. The *eighth* source of many shortcomings is idleness and loss of time. This is the origin of many faults, both external and internal, and it is hard to reconcile innocence of life with idleness in one who has given himself to God by entering into Religion, where he is more exposed to temptation from the devil and his own corrupt nature.

9. The *ninth* source is reserve and aversion in regard of Superiors. From this arise frequent murmurings and complaints, misrepresentations of their conduct, condemnations of their arrangements, mistrust, and disobedience.

To one or other of these sources are to be attributed nearly all the sins, offences, and negligences which spoil our perfection and imperil the fervour of Religious. Hence it is important to be alive to their first manifestation, and to repress them at once and not to delay until it is too late. *Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur* is a safe and necessary principle if we mean to be serious in our profession and to acquire perfection.

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APPENDIX IV.

ORDER OF EXERCISES FOR A RETREAT OF EIGHT DAYS.¹

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.

2nd Meditation.—On the End of Creatures.

3rd Meditation.—On Indifference.

Consideration. —On Dissipation.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 20 ; iii. 9.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.

2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.

3rd Meditation.—On the Sin of the Christian.

Consideration. —On the necessity of Prayer.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 22 ; ii. 5.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Hell.

2nd Meditation.—On Death.

3rd Meditation.—On the Prodigal Son.

Consideration. —On Trials.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 23, 24.

¹ It is supposed that each day, a repetition of one or more of the meditations of the day will be made, for the space of an hour, by the person making the Exercises.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Kingdom of Christ.

2nd Meditation.—The Incarnation.

3rd Meditation.—The Nativity.

Consideration. —On Humility.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 7, 2; iii. 3, 13.

FIFTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—Flight into Egypt.

2nd Meditation.—The Hidden Life.

3rd Meditation.—The Baptism of our Lord.

Consideration. —On Mortification.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 33—38.

SIXTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Two Standards.

2nd Meditation.—On Three Classes.

3rd Meditation.—On Three Degrees of Humility.

Consideration. —Rules of Election.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 23, 27, 52.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Last Supper.

2nd Meditation.—The Agony in the Garden.

3rd Meditation.—The Scourging at the Pillar.

Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 11, 12.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Crucifixion.

2nd Meditation.—The Death of Jesus.

3rd Meditation.—The Resurrection.

Consideration. —Contemplation on Divine Love.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 6—48.

A SECOND ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
- 2nd Meditation.—On the End of Creatures.
- 3rd Meditation.—On the End of the Christian.
- Consideration. —On Prayer and Spiritual Duties.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 21.

SECOND DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.
- 2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.
- 3rd Meditation.—On Hell.
- Consideration. —On Sanctity of Ordinary Actions.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 5 ; iv. 7.

THIRD DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On Death.
- 2nd Meditation.—On Particular Judgment.
- 3rd Meditation.—On General Judgment.
- Consideration. —On Mortification.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 14.

FOURTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—Conversion of St. Peter.
- 2nd Meditation.—On Kingdom of Christ.
- 3rd Meditation.—On Two Standards.
- Consideration. —On Charity.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 32—56.

FIFTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On Three Classes.
- 2nd Meditation.—On the Baptism of Christ.

3rd Meditation.—Our Lord tempted.

Consideration. —On Temptations.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 13; iii. 18.

SIXTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Sermon on the Mount.

2nd Meditation.—The Storm at Sea.

3rd Meditation.—The Miracle of the Loaves.

Consideration. —The Value and Use of Time.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 41, 39.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Last Supper.

2nd Meditation.—On the Scourging at the Pillar.

3rd Meditation.—On the Crowning with Thorns.

Consideration. —On the Blessed Sacrament.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 11, 12; iv. 1—3.

EIGHTH DAY.

• 1st Meditation.—The Resurrection.

2nd Meditation.—The Ascension.

3rd Meditation.—Contemplation on Divine Love.

Consideration. —The Election.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iv. 16, 17.

A THIRD ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.

2nd Meditation.—On the End of the Christian.

3rd Meditation.—On the Use of Creatures.

Consideration. —On the Duties of our State.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 1, 6, 7.

SECOND DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On Indifference.
2nd Meditation.—On Venial Sin.
3rd Meditation.—On our many Venial Sins.
Consideration. —On the necessity of Prayer.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 9, 10, 15.

THIRD DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On Purgatory.
2nd Meditation.—On Particular Judgment.
3rd Meditation.—On the Conversion of St. Peter or of
Magdalene.
Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 40, 41, 47.

FOURTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—On the Annunciation.
3rd Meditation.—On Visitation of our Lady.
Consideration. —On Humility.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 23—25.

FIFTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Nativity.
2nd Meditation.—The Presentation.
3rd Meditation.—The Adoration of the Magi.
Consideration. —On Purity of Intention.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 36, 37.

SIXTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Flight into Egypt.
2nd Meditation.—The Hidden Life at Nazareth.
3rd Meditation.—The Baptism in the Jordan.
Consideration. —The Rules of Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 34, 35.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—Two Standards.

2nd Meditation.—Three Classes.

3rd Meditation.—The Institution of the Eucharist.

Consideration. —The Mass.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iv. 2—4.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Internal Sorrows of Jesus.

2nd Meditation.—His Exterior Sufferings.

3rd Meditation.—The Death of Jesus.

Consideration. —The Blessings of Suffering.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 12.

A FOURTH ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—The End of Man.

2nd Meditation.—The End of Creatures.

3rd Meditation.—Indifference.

Consideration. —Necessity, motives, advantages of
Indifference.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 31.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.

2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.

3rd Meditation.—Effects of Sin on the Soul.

Consideration. —On Neglect of the Duties of our State.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 20, 11.

THIRD DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—On Hell.
- 2nd Meditation.—On Death.
- 3rd Meditation.—On General Judgment.
- Consideration. —On Eternity.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 49; iii. 48.

FOURTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Kingdom of Christ.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Incarnation.
- 3rd Meditation.—The Nativity.
- Consideration. —Spiritual Poverty and Detachment.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 10, 11.

FIFTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Adoration of the Magi.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Hidden Life.
- 3rd Meditation.—Two Standards.
- Consideration. —On Obedience to Superiors.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 4, 13, 18.

SIXTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—Temptations in the Desert.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Miracles of Jesus.
- 3rd Meditation.—The Sermon on the Mount.
- Consideration. —Jesus our Model in the Use of our Tongue.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 46—59.

SEVENTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Agony in the Garden.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Treason of Judas and Flight of the Apostles.

3rd Meditation.—Condemnation of Jesus.

Consideration. —On Humiliations.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 56.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Death upon the Cross.

2nd Meditation.—The Resurrection.

3rd Meditation.—The Contemplation on Divine Love.

Consideration. —Review the Considerations of the
Retreat.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 47.

ORDER OF EXERCISES FOR A FOUR
DAYS' RETREAT.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—The End of Man.

2nd Meditation.—The End of the Christian.

3rd Meditation.—The End of Creatures.

4th Meditation.—Mortal Sin.

Consideration. —On the Duties of your State of Life.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 21, 22.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.

2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.

3rd Meditation.—On the Heinousness of Sin in a
Christian.

4th Meditation.—On the Pains of Hell.

Consideration. —The Life of Faith.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 24.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Kingdom of Christ.

2nd Meditation.—Two Standards.

3rd Meditation.—Three Classes.

4th Meditation.—Public Life of Christ.

Consideration. —The Election.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 48, 49.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Interior Sufferings of Christ.

2nd Meditation.—The Exterior Sufferings of Christ.

3rd Meditation.—The Crucifixion.

4th Meditation.—The Resurrection.

Consideration. —Perseverance.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iv, 16, 17.

SECOND ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—The End of Man.

2nd Meditation.—On Sin.

3rd Meditation.—On our own Sins.

4th Meditation.—On Hell.

Consideration. —On Institution and Practice of
Penance.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 30, 31.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Death.

2nd Meditation.—On General Judgment.

3rd Meditation.—The Return of the Prodigal.

4th Meditation.—The Kingdom of Christ.

Consideration. —The Mass and Communion.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 2, 11, 13.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—Two Standards.

2nd Meditation.—Three Classes of Men.

3rd Meditation.—The Sermon on the Mount.

4th Meditation.—The Last Supper.

Consideration.. —The Election.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 15, 25; ii. 6.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Crucifixion.

2nd Meditation.—The Death of Jesus.

3rd Meditation.—The Burial of Jesus.

4th Meditation.—The Resurrection.

Consideration. —Reformation of Life.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 7, 8.

THIRD ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—End of Man.

2nd Meditation.—On Sin.

3rd Meditation.—On Death.

4th Meditation.—On Hell.

Consideration. —On the Duties of our State.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 25; ii. 5.

SECOND DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Kingdom of Christ.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Incarnation.
- 3rd Meditation.—The Nativity.
- 4th Meditation.—The Flight into Egypt.
- Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 18, 19.

THIRD DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—Two Standards.
- 2nd Meditation.—Three Classes of Men.
- 3rd Meditation.—Three Degrees of Humility.
- 4th Meditation.—The Eight Beatitudes.
- Consideration. —On Value and Use of Time.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 8—10.

FOURTH DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The Scourging at the Pillar.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Crowning with Thorns.
- 3rd Meditation.—The Death of the Cross.
- 4th Meditation.—The Ascension.
- Consideration. —The Election.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 12 ; iv. 16.

FOURTH ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

- 1st Meditation.—The End of Man.
- 2nd Meditation.—The Three Sins.
- 3rd Meditation.—Venial Sin.
- 4th Meditation.—Purgatory.
- Consideration. —The Value and Use of Time.
- Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 57.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Kingdom of Christ.

2nd Meditation.—The Nativity.

3rd Meditation.—The Hidden Life.

4th Meditation.—Two Standards.

Consideration. —The Election.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 57, 59.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—Three Classes of Men.

2nd Meditation.—Baptism in the Jordan.

3rd Meditation.—The Institution of the Eucharist.

4th Meditation.—The Agony in the Garden.

Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 47, 49.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Carriage of the Cross.

2nd Meditation.—The Death upon the Cross.

3rd Meditation.—The Ascension.

4th Meditation.—The Contemplation on Divine Love.

Consideration. —Resignation to the Divine Will.

Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 24.

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